Quasi-Armies: Obstacles to, or Vehicle for, State-building in Central Africa

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Abstract

The object of inquiry of this thesis is the military as a constitutive component of state institutions in the Central African sub region. Its aim is to identify whether and to what extent the military has been and can be instrumental to the process of state-building and state formation in the region, and whether and under which conditions it is an obstacle to that process. This thesis is built upon two assumptions: the key conceptual differentiation between the state formation process and the state-building project, and the relevance of political culture in explaining military development and the military relationship to the state. A shaping parameter of the analysis is whether, and in which conditions, it is possible to “accelerate” state-building in the context of a given political culture. Lessons for Africa are drawn from historical analogy and the limits of classic civil-military theory in interpreting Africa’s experience analysed on the basis of the example of three states, Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Rwanda. Each national situation and each period is examined from a dual historical and sociological perspective so as to pin down the articulation between political decisions and cultural constraints, and the positioning of the military at key turns in those countries development. Clarity is cast from this analysis on the degree and characteristics of “quasi-ness” of each state, and correspondingly, the level of “quasi-ness” of its armed forces

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Contents

List of abbreviations

AA	Africa Archive of the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
AFDL	*Alliance des Forces Démocratique pour la Libération du Congo-Zaïre*
ANC	*Armée nationale congolaise*
ARC	Congolese Revolutionary Army
BIR	*Brigade d'intervention rapide*
BIR	*Bataillon d'intervention rapide*
BLI	*Bataillon léger d'intervention*
CAR	Central African Republic
CFS	Congo Free State
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CMR	Civil-military Relations
CNDP	*Congrès national pour la défense du people*
CNL	*Conseil national de libération*
CNO	*Comité National d'Organisation*
CNS	Conférence nationale souveraine
CONADER	National Commission for Demobilisation and Reinsertion
CORLOG	*Corps Logistique*
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
DSP	*Division spéciale présidentielle*
DST	*Détachements en service territorial*
EFO	*Ecole de Formation des Officiers*
EUSEC	EU Advisory and Assistance Mission for Security Reform
FAC	*Forces armées congolaises*
FAC	*Forces armées camerounaises*
FAR	*Forces armées rwandaises*
FARDC	*Forces armées de la république démocratique du Congo*
FAZ	*Forces armées zaïroises*
RDF	Rwandan Defence Force
FDLR	Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda
FIA	*Force d'intervention interafricaine*
FLNC	*Front pour la libération nationale du Congo*
FP	*Force Publique*
GN	*Gendarmerie Nationale*
GNR	*Garde Nationale Rwandaise*
GP	*Garde Présidentielle*
GR	*Garde Républicaine*
ICG	International Crisis Group
ICTR	International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda
M23	*Mouvement 23 Mars*
MDR	*Mouvement démocratique republicain parmehutu*
MINUSMA	*Mission multidimensionnelle intégrée des Nations Unies pour la stabilisation au Mali*
MLC	*Mouvement de libération du Congo*

MOD	Ministry of Defence
MONUC	Mission des Nations Unies en République démocratique du Congo
MONUSCO	Mission de l'Organisation des Nations Unies pour la stabilisation en RD Congo
MPR	*Mouvement populaire de la révolution*
MRND	*Mouvement rwandais de développement*
NCO	Non commissioned officer
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
OAU	Organisation of African States
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
RCD	*Rassemblement congolais pour la démocratie*
RCD/K(isangani)	*Rassemblement congolais pour la démocratie* (Uganda)
RCD/ML	*Rassemblement congolais pour la démocratie/Mouvement de libération*
RCD/N	*Rassemblement congolais pour la démocratie/ National*
RDC/G(oma)	*Rassemblement congolais pour la démocratie* (Rwanda)
RDPC	*Rassemblement démocratique du peuple camerounais*
RPA	Rwandan Patriotic Army
RPR	Rwandan Patriotic Front
SARM	*Service d'Action et de Renseignement Militaires*
SSR	Security Sector Reform
TC	*Troupes campées*
TST	*Troupes en service territorial*
UN	United Nations
UNAMID	United Nations/African Union Mission in Darfur
UNOC	United Nations Operation in the Congo
UPC	*Union des populations du Cameroun*
WWII	World War Two
ZIGEMA-CSS	Zigama-Credit and Savings Society
ZOPAC	Zone de pacification

Chapter One: Introduction

In 2010 a caravan of Central African heads of states toured the capitals of the sub-region, celebrating the first half century of their countries' independence. The celebrations came in the form of pompous military parades, at times including the entire national armed forces. Modern fighter jets, reserved for such festive occasions, were performing impressive manoeuvres over the tribunes of a select audience, bearing witness to the potency of the heads of states – seven out of ten being former senior military figures. Shiny SUVs were criss-crossing the major cities, lavishing the population with baseball caps and t-shirts displaying a laurel-framed '50'. *On est grand, on est adulte* – we are now grown up – was a headline of the Gabonese semi-official daily newspaper *L'Union*, referring to 50 years of independence.

All states of francophone Central Africa gained their 'political kingdom' – to use Kwame Nkrumah's famous phrase – the sovereignty of statehood, between 1960 and 1962.[1] From that moment on, this sovereignty was taken as a given, not only by the concerned African states themselves, but by all existing members of the international community, including former colonial powers. Uncontested, the newcomers were seen as representing simply a quantitative addition to the international society of states and were accepted, one by one, as members of the United Nations. The decision of the Organisation of African States (OAU) in 1963 not to question the borders inherited from colonialism completed the process of state creation. In each new

1 See Mazrui, Ali A (1999), *Seek Ye First the Political Kingdom*, in Africa since 1935 University of California Press, Berkeley, 105–26

national capital, the public display of an army, no matter how small, became the most visible attribute of political legitimacy and undisputed sovereignty.

In contrast to this demonstrative exhibition of statehood, the reality of the Central African sub-region reveals an immense discrepancy between the prominence of the state's symbols on display and the latter's empirical presence. Contrary to Nkrumah's inspiration (and aspiration), political, economic, infrastructural and institutional progress did not follow automatically from political independence and international sovereignty. Rather, African countries belong to a group characterised since the early 1990s as 'failed', 'failing' or, today, 'fragile' states by practitioners in the field of development,[2] whilst academics have gradually built on the original 'quasi-state' terminology coined by Robert Jackson to develop more accurate, nuanced and differentiated descriptives.[3] This applies in particular to Central Africa, where the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has been billed 'a territory in search of a state',[4] whilst the Central African Republic (CAR) has been called a 'phantom state'[5] and even Cameroon, despite its apparent stability, has earned the 'fragile state' qualifier from some analysts.[6] One group of scholars has

2 See in particular the 'International Dialogue on Fragile States' supported by the OECD since 2008, In that context, several Central African states (DRC, CAR, Burundi, Chad) belong to the so-called 'G7+'of self-designated 'fragile and conflict-affected states' demanding special treatment in international development assistance, OECD (2008), International Dialogue and Partnership

3 Jackson, Robert H (1987), *Quasi-states, Dual Regimes, and Neoclassical Theory*, International Organization, 41, 4, 519-549. Other scholars have used the terms 'limited statehood', 'para-statehood', 'shadow states', 'rhizome states', 'lame Leviathan', 'holes in the fabric of international society', political entities at a 'tenuous stage of state formation', 'states, where state-building and territorial integration are ongoing projects', see also Clapham, Christopher S (1998), *Degrees of Statehood*, Review of International Studies, 24, 2, 143-157; For a comprehensive treatment of the definitions and typologies, see Mcloughlin, Claire (2010), Topic Guide on Fragile States

4 Pourtier, Roland (1997), *Du Zaïre au Congo: un territoire en quête d'État*, Afrique Contemporaine, 183, 7-30. On the DRC, see also ICG (2010c), *Congo: A Stalled Democratic Agenda*, Africa Briefing, 73,

5 ICG (2007), *Central African Republic: Anatomy of a Phantom State*, Africa Report, 136, p.2

6 ICG (2010a), *Cameroon: Fragile State?*, Africa Report, 160

added Rwanda to the lot.[7] As a general tendency, terms like 'weak state' and 'criminal state' developed to find an explanatory pattern for the 'otherness' of political African conditions, ubiquitously populate the literature, explaining African polities in terms of an unintended anomaly to the 'normal' state trajectory.[8]

Central African states are characterised by the lack of effective capacity to collect taxes to provide basic 'public goods' such as physical and social infrastructure and security; their inability to control fully a national territory demarcated by clear boundaries; a lack of domestic consensus to define and modify the rules of the political game; weak institutionalised systems of conflict resolution (such as Parliament and the Judiciary); and shallow identification of the population with the state. Indexes commonly used today to rank state stability and resilience indicate that the Central African states rank amongst the worst performers, the DRC, Burundi, the CAR and Chad invariably falling at the bottom of the statistical scale, with Congo, Cameroon and Rwanda coming just above.[9]

Given the wide consensus about the 'quasi-character' of Central African states, what did those militaries proudly paraded on Independence Day

7 Straus, Scott and Lars Waldorf (2011), Remaking Rwanda: State Building and Human Rights After Mass Violence, University of Wisconsin Press, Madison

8 Kaarsholm, Preben (2006), Violence, Political Culture and Development in Africa, James Currey, Oxford; Keen, David (1996), *Organised Chaos: Not the New World Order*, The World Today, 15, January, 14-17; Mehler, Andreas (2009), *Hybrid Regimes and Oligopolies of Violence in Africa*, in Fischer, Martina and Schmelzle, Beatrix, Building Peace in the Absence of States Berghof Research Center, Berlin, 57-64; Reno, W (2007), *Patronage Politics and the Behavior of Armed Groups*, Civil Wars, 9, 4, 324-342; Reno, William (1998), Warlord politics and African states, Lynne Rienner Publishers, Boulder; Rummel, Rudolph Joseph (1994), Death by government, Transactions Publishers, New Brunswick, NJ

9 Failed states index: www.foreignpolicy.com/failed_states_index_2012_interactive, retrieved on 14 July 2012; see also Marshall, Monty G and Benjamin R Cole (2011), Conflict, Governance, and State Fragility, Global Report 2011, Centre for Systemic Peace, Vienna, VA, and UNDP (2011), Regional and National Trends in the Human Development Index 1980-2011, United Nations Development Programme, New York

actually represent?[10] Further, what role, if any, has the military played in those states over the past 50 years in defining, consolidating, and maintaining the prevailing political order – beyond mere political symbolism – and where is its place, and function, within society? Is it possible that, being organic parts of those quasi-states, the Central African militaries actually constitute no more than 'quasi-armies'?[11]

This dissertation aims to answer these questions by examining the development of the Central African military in the context of post-independence state evolution. It provides an account of the role of the military as one of the key social and political players in Central Africa, in order to help identify whether and in which conditions it has been, or can be a vehicle for state-building in the modern, 'Weberian' sense of the term, and where and how it is an obstacle to achieving this aim. The research interest grew during my five years of living and working and doing research in Francophone Central Africa. Equipped with knowledge of African conditions that resulted from mere theoretical engagement with the topic, the experienced reality check on the ground opened up this researcher's mind to a better understanding of the subject than desk research would have allowed for. After intensive research and ever widening access to the African military world it became apparent that there were two possible perspectives to approach African civil-military relations: an official one claiming representativeness of reality, and the actual truth. The hidden but, as it became obvious over time, violently strong tension between these perspectives resulted in a research question this thesis

10 Clapham (1998) goes even farther, denying even quasi-statehood to sub-Saharan African states which had lost their empirical sovereignty because they could only survive through external support. Like many observers, Clapham confuses here regimes with states

11 The terms 'quasi-military', and 'quasi-police', were first used by Iliffe, John (1979), A Modern History of Tanganyika, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p.77, to describe the additional military, para-military, and secret services in parallel to the national armies respectively. This enquiry goes further in arguing that the national armies themselves are quasi-armies

crystallised around: Can the African military play a constructive role in building modern and even democratic states or must it vitiate the foundations of state construction, as there is a mismatch between its function as a social group and the standard role it is supposed to play as an anchor of state institutions?

1 Key Concepts: The State and the Military

1.1 Forms of States

Conceptually and to some extent historically, it is possible to distinguish three types of states: the pre-modern 'natural state', to use a concept coined by North et al.,[12] or 'Tillian state' in the words of Abdel-Fatau Musah[13]; the 'modern' Weberian/Westphalian model; and the 'post-modern' democratic state.[14] To each form of state corresponds a form of the military.

The 'natural state' is a pre-modern form of political organisation, characterised mainly by personal power relationships and unaccountable elites permanently seeking to expand their unlimited predatory rule. Such states are marked by dispersal of control over both the means of violence and personal power relationships (patron-client). Although there is no overarching order to limit intra-elite competition, such Tillian states may achieve some degree of stability by the creation of dominant elite coalitions whose rents increase if general violence is limited.[15] Natural or Tillian states correspond to 'limited-

12 North, Douglass C, et al. (2007), Limited Access Orders in the Developing World: A New Approach to the Problems of Development, World Bank Publications, Washington DC

13 Musah, Abdel-Fatau (2002), *Privatization of security, arms proliferation and the process of state collapse in Africa*, Development and Change, 33, 5, 911-933, pp.916f. Musah deduced the concept of 'Tillian predatory power structure' from Charles Tilly's description of Early Modern European state formation as 'organised crime'

14 The designation of the three standard models as 'pre-modern', 'modern' and 'post-modern' is most clearly made by Cooper, Robert (1997), The Post-modern State and the World Order, Demos, New York, p.43

15 Buzan, Barry (2010), *Culture and International Society*, International Affairs, 86, 1, 1-25, p.15; this description dovetails with Charles Tilly's of state formation as a form of organised crime, see Tilly, Charles (1985), *War Making and State Making as Organized Crime*, in Evans, Peter B, et al., Bringing the State Back In Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 169-191

access order' societies[16] or what authors such as Karl Popper and Ralf Dahrendorf describe as 'closed societies'.[17] Common features include the unfinished historical process of state formation across the successive pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial eras and the fundamental features of African patronage-based political culture, which acts as a powerful force of resistance against the establishment of direct rule.

Whilst open society allows change of political leadership in a peaceful manner, and individuals may personally decide on their affairs, in closed societies, a person will rarely find him/herself in the position of doubting how s/he ought to act. The 'right way' is always determined, even if difficult to follow, and can never become an object of critical consideration. One can generalise that the combination of closed society conditions with limited access order forms the political culture of the natural state. In such proto-states, both the civilian and the military parts of the bureaucracy remain underdeveloped. As a rule, the upper echelons of the armed forces are either identical with the political elite, or they form its uniformed wing. Usually composed of mercenaries, the military rank and file functions as a tool in the hands of the elite in its strategy of resource extraction from the wider population.

Secondly, the 'modern' Weberian state is based on institution-building and the gradual limitation of the powers of the ruler as the latter is replaced at the centre of political gravity by the legal rational bureaucracy, of which the military is a part.[18] Historically, the modern state developed incrementally, with

16 According to North, et al. (2007), a limited access order creates economic rents through privileged access to political influence, and then uses these rents to sustain the political order via a patronage scaffolding holding it together. Access to rents remains a privilege

17 See Popper, Karl R (1957), Die offene Gesellschaft und ihre Feinde: 1 Der Zauber Platons, UTB/Francke, München, Schmidt, Heike (2001), *Transkript einer Diskussion zwischen Ralf Dahrendorf und Robert Menasse*, in Dahrendorf, Sir Ralf and Schmidt, Heike, Die offene Gesellschaft und ihre falschen Freunde Institut fuer eine Offene Gesellschaft, Wien, 35-59

18 Weber, Max (1957), *Politics as Vocation*, in Gerth, H H, From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology Routledge, London, p.78

almost four centuries separating the early manifestations of centralised states under autocratic or despotic monarchies from the late 19th century (more or less) accomplished nation-states. Weberian states are in transition from limited access order to open-access order. In terms of political culture, this corresponds to an alteration from Early Modern rational thought, such as Machiavellism, to late modern concepts, such as nationalism, and to the emergence of increasingly participatory and more open societies. In other words, the 'idea' of the state develops from a sense of belonging to a sense of participation, responsibility, and entitlement. Three key properties characterise the military in the accomplished Weberian state: first, it is no longer the tool of a personal ruler but it becomes the armed wing of the state; second, it is increasingly professionalised, with more and more standardised training and promotion according to objective performance criteria; and third, limitations bearing on executive power apply to the institutionalised military, which is gradually subjected to civilian control, even if it remains a privileged policy tool.

As the contribution of the masses to the war effort becomes more and more demanding (financially or via conscription), mass involvement in public affairs opens the stage for the third model of statehood.

The contemporary democratic state centres on the well-being of the citizens and, in more recent understandings, their 'human security'.[19] Political leaders and office holders at all levels are accountable to the people via a variety of channels (elections, the courts, etc.). A participatory political system and an 'open society' form the basis for such an 'open-access order'. The rule

19 New understandings of the role of the state developed at a quick pace as of the early 1990s under the dual impact of the democratic revolutions in Eastern Europe, the Balkan wars and the Rwandan genocide, see the seminal article by Franck, Thomas M (1992), *The Emerging Right to Democratic Governance*, American Journal of International Law, 86, 1, 46-91, and the debate leading to the declaration United Nations (2009), Implementing the Responsibility to Protect, Report of the Secretary-General, General Assembly, New York, A/63/677; see also Evans, Gareth (2009), *The Responsibility to Protect: Ending Mass Atrocity Crimes Once and for All*, Irish Studies in International Affairs, 20, 1, 7-13

of law, institutional balancing of power, and structures for an institutionalised dialogue between the state and social/economic groups are defining elements.[20] This logic also applies to the military realm, whereby democratic control via Parliament and civil society extends over the armed forces. In some cases (but not all), the military includes the direct participation of citizens as *Bürger in Uniform*,[21] thus representing the modern form of alignment of the constituted community with its statutory military. In the context of the democratic state, the use of the military to serve the predatory policies of the political elites is impossible. No civilian or military oligarchy can impose itself because the state is under multiple forms of checks and balances.

Against the background of such a state typology, it is important to realise that 'the proper subordination of a competent, professional military to the ends of policy as determined by civilian authority',[22] which is often dubbed as the 'Huntingtonian' model of objective civilian control over the military, has imposed itself only recently in the West, whereas historical reality varies from case to case and from period to period. The yet more demanding concept of 'democratic control of the armed forces' has achieved even less universal recognition, although it has been a core aim of state-building activities carried out by the international community for more than a decade.[23]

20 Under favourable economic conditions, this state will become a welfare state, Offe, Claus (2001), *Staat, Demokratie und Krieg*, in Joas, Hans, Lehrbuch der Soziologie Campus, Frankfurt/Main, p.417

21 Slogan of the German Bundeswehr: citizen in uniform

22 Huntington, Samuel P (1957), The Soldier and the State; the Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations, Harvard University Press, Cambridge MA see also Feaver, Peter D (1996), *The Civil-Military Problematique: Huntington, Janowitz and the Question of Civilian Control*, Armed Forces & Society, 23, 2, 149-178

23 On democratic control and security sector reform (SSR) see Cawthra, Gavin and Robin Luckham (2003), Governing Insecurity: Democratic Control of Military and Security Establishments in Transitional Democracies, Zed Books, London; New York; from a practitioner's perspective see DCAF Geneva, www.dcaf.ch/, and GFN-SSR http://www.ssrnetwork.net/

1.2 State Formation Versus State-building

The relevance and the role of the state have had a come-back in academic literature as well as in policy programmes over the past two decades, driven by the peaceful or violent disintegration, emergence, re-emergence or reconstruction of states that has accompanied the end of the Cold War.[24] A broad range of themes has been addressed in that context, including such key questions as whether the state kept any relevance at all in an increasingly globalising world[25] and what kinds of 'public goods' should be provided by the state as opposed to goods that would be better generated by the private sector, sub-state public collectives, or supra-regional organisations. Much of that literature, however, employs a static treatment of the state concept, implicitly taking the accomplished Weberian state as an immutable reality. A dynamic perspective does exist in the literature discussing the future of states, for example in the context of a gradually integrating European Union or in a globalised economy.[26] However, the same dynamic approach is mostly absent from the literature on failed/failing/fragile states, in other words, those that have not yet attained the 'Weberian minimum'. An exception is found in a relatively new stream of literature depicting developments at play in such states as 'multi-layered governance' or 'hybrid state-building'.[27] However, even

24 Pioneer work was already done in the mid-1980s, see Evans, Peter B, et al. (1985), Bringing the State Back In, Cambridge University Press Cambridge

25 See for example Mann, Michael (1997), *Has Globalization Ended the Rise of the Nation State?*, Review of International Political Economy, 4, 3, 472-496

26 See Busch, Andreas (2000), *Unpacking the Globalisation Debate: Approaches, Evidence and Data*, in Hay, Colin and Marsh, David, Demystifying Globalisation Macmillan, London, 21-45, Hay, Colin, et al. (1999), Globalisation, European Integration and the Persistence of European Social Models, Economic and Social Research Council, Swindon

27 The concepts of 'multi-layered governance' and 'hybrid state-building' are promoted by the University of Sussex under the direction of David Leonard, the Research Centre of Potsdam, Berlin-based Universities, and the SWP, see for instance Fischer, Martina and Beatrix Schmelzle (2009), Building Peace in the Absence of States: Challenging the Discourse on State Failure, Berghof Research Center, Berlin, p.8; see also Mehler (2009); Vlassenroot, Koen and Timothy Raeymaekers (2005), The Formation of Centres of Profit, Power and Protection: Conflict and Social Transformation in Eastern DR Congo, Centre of African Studies, University of Copenhagen, Copenhagen; Jackson, Paul (2003), *Warlords as Alternative Forms of Governance Systems*, Small Wars and Insurgencies 14, 2, 131-150

if this literature is considered as a useful analytical tool by some, it has failed to gain political traction, especially in the security domain.[28] Further, although it does adopt a dynamic perspective of the future of fragile states, it fails to analyse the roots of the present situation and the policy dilemmas that context creates. In other words, the existing literature lacks historical depth.

The present research aims to fill this lack of historical depth by introducing an important distinction between the concepts of 'state formation' and 'state-building'. State formation is a long, incremental, non-directed, and rather 'organic' development. It is not a single long-term event, nor a predictable uni-linear process. Rather, state formation 'happened' and could only be recognised retroactively, in a historical perspective. As Charles Tilly has concluded from his masterly analysis of the emergence and consolidation of European states, and Victoria Tin-Bor Hui has confirmed by applying the Tillian methodology to the case of China, there is 'no single standard process each state passed through' to achieve its existence as a sovereign political entity.[29] Besides, the outcome of this process was in no case a foregone conclusion: as Tilly demonstrates, the history of state formation is also largely the history of state-disappearance. Historically, the ability or inability of political rulers to take 'state-strengthening' measures, to use Tin-Bor's terminology, was crucial in determining which entities aspiring to sovereignty would actually survive. Those that yielded too many 'state-weakening' policies were doomed to disappear.[30] In a context in which, to paraphrase once again Tilly, state-

28 Recommendations made in 2011 by a group of scholars to the European Union to consider non-state actors as important security providers in its SSR programmes have reportedly met a lot of scepticism

29 For the quote see Tilly, Charles (1992), Coercion, Capital and European States, AD 990-1990, Wiley-Blackwell, Bognor Regis, p.194; for the concept see Tilly (1992) and Tin-Bor Hui, Victoria (2005), War and State Formation in Ancient China and Early Modern Europe, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge

30 Tin-Bor Hui (2005), pp.50f; most states have disappeared, and only the successful survivors are being looked at. The 400 states of 15th century Germany are covered by four states in 2013, for a discussion see Herbst, Jeffrey (2004), *Lets them Fail: State Failure in*

making was war-making, the constitution of a professional, increasingly organised, centralised and permanent military was a core 'state-strengthening' measure.[31]

By contrast, state-building is a purposeful, deliberate operation, driven by a plan, usually following strict rules and sequencing, and aiming to achieve a desired specific outcome. Attempts at state-building only became possible once the 'basic' Weberian model had been sufficiently stabilised, in other words, as of the late 19th century. This distinction between state formation and state-building is all important in the analysis of the African military and its relationship to the state. In the former, there is a concomitant organic development of the state and its military in a process of mutual consolidation, whereas in the latter, the adjustment must be purposeful and pursued with great care so that by strengthening themselves, the state and the military do not undermine each other.

On the face of it, it looked evident that the relationship between war and the weakness of states could be transposed to analyse post-1990 developments in African (and other) states. This led to prolific discussions, the common denominator of which was to associate state 'collapse' or 'failure' with conflict and post-conflict situations,[32] understandably so, because this failure or

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Theory and Practice, in Rotberg, Robert I, When States Fail Princeton University Press, Princeton, pp.302-318, and Davis, Norman (2012), Vanished Kingdoms, Penguin Books, London

31 See Tilly (1985)

32 Ayoob, Mohammed (2007), *State Making, State Breaking, and State Failure*, in Crocker, Chester A, Leashing the Dogs of War United Institute of Peace Press, Washington DC, ; Egnell, Robert and Peter Halden (2009), *Laudable, Ahistorical and Overambitious: Security Sector Reform Meets State Formation Theory*, Conflict, Security and Development, 9, 1, 27-54; Fukuyama, Francis (2004), State-Building: Governance and World Order in the 21st Century, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY; Bates, Robert H. (2008), When things fell apart : state failure in late-century Africa, Cambridge University Press, New York; Clapham, Christopher S (2002), *The Challenge to the State in a Globalized World*, Development and Change, 33, 5, 775-795; Milliken, J and K Krause (2002), *State Failure, State Collapse, and State Reconstruction: Concepts, Lessons and Strategies*, Development and Change, 33, 5, 753-774; Reno, W. (2006), *Congo: from state collapse to 'absolutism', to state failure*, Third World Quarterly, 27, 1, 43-56; Trotha, Trutz von (2000), *Die Zukunft liegt in Afrika. Vom Zerfall des Staates, von der Vorherrschaft der konzentrischen Ordnung und vom Aufstieg der*

collapse turned into a crucial security issue on the international agenda in the 1990s. We shall argue, however, that what looks like 'state failure' in the context of armed conflict is rather a symptom of unfinished state-building, representing the collapse of an institutionalised sinecure administration of society. Indeed, a closer look at the Central African region shows that countries do not necessarily need armed conflict to crumble.[33] Instead of engaging in state-strengthening policies, as they were described by Victoria Tin-Bor Hui, Central African states remain mired in state-weakening measures, engaged in a process of (non-directed) state formation, which presents both similarities with and differences from the experience of more ancient European and Asian states.[34]

1.3 The Army and the State

An understanding of the role and place of the military in different kinds of states is essential as a prerequisite to judge different levels of African statehood and military professionalism. The military existed before states took shape, and it was centrally involved in the formation of states. In the course of this formation, the military mutated fittingly. The process of state formation, as will be demonstrated, must therefore concurrently be thought of as one of 'military-formation'. This does not mean that all states followed a uniform development pattern: warfare and bureaucratisation are highly complex processes involving rational and irrational motivations, ethically sophisticated as well as narrow-minded objectives, and a variety of levels of ambition. However, in all convolutions of intention and reason the 'manager of, or

Parastaatlichkeit, Leviathan, 28, 2, 253-279; Yannis, A (2002), *State Collapse and its Implications for PeaceBuilding and Reconstruction*, Development and Change, 33, 5, 817-835; Zartman, William I (1995), Collapsed States: the Disintegration and Restoration of Legitimate Authority, Lynne Rienner, Boulder & London

33 For the Cameroonian example see ICG (2010a), *Cameroon: Fragile State?*, Africa Report, 160

34 Tin-Bor Hui (2005), pp.142ff

specialist in, violence' – which is the military – remains at the centre of political and social gravity.[35]

Historically, state formation and military formation went hand in hand until the current combination between the Weberian rational legal state and its loyal professional army was achieved. In this process, the military and the state were invariably uni-ovular twins in their successive forms and levels of materialisation. Thus the military could only become the organised, centralised and undisputed holder of the means of coercion when the state had reached an accomplished Weberian form. Only from that moment on could it qualify as an *army*. It is therefore a fundamental premise of this research that, to have a military in the shape of a 'proper' army, a state must at least be a Weberian, directly-ruled sovereign political entity.[36]

Whilst it is important to recognise – including for the study of Central Africa – that other forms of non-statutory military formations, including tribal or regional militias, play a functional and a social role *vis-à-vis* the community they are part of,[37] they cannot qualify as armies as they are either opposed by the state or only temporarily tolerated.[38] Should such armed formations, in supporting the conquest of state institutions by a group hostile to the power

35 Reno, William (2000), *Shadow States and the Political Economy of Civil Wars*, in Berdal, Mats R and Malone, David, Greed and Grievance Lynne Rienner, Boulder, 43-68, pp.457f: for the concept 'manager of violence' see also Huntington (1957), p.15, who originally took it from Lasswell, Harold (1941), *The Garrison State and Specialists on Violence*, American Journal of Sociology, 46, January, 455-468, pp.457f

36 The English language unfortunately does not allow for the distinction between 'army' in the generic sense of the entire armed forces and 'army' as a service distinct from the air force or the navy. Unless otherwise indicated, we shall use the term in its generic sense

37 For a discussion of these functions see Gow, James (1992), Legitimacy and the Military, The Yugoslav Crisis, Pinter Publishers, London, chapter 2. See also Bratton, Michael (2007), *Formal Versus Informal Institutions in Africa*, Journal of Democracy, 18, 3, 96-110 p.98

38 For this reason Robin Luckham has pointed out that SSR must go beyond the disengagement of regular forces from politics, rather including non-statutory military in the calculation, see Luckham, Robin (2004), *Military Withdrawal from Politics in Africa Revisited*, in Kieh, George Klay and Ogaba, Agbese Pita, The Military and Politica in Africa Ashgate, Aldershot, 91-108

holders, be successful – a development not unknown in Central Africa[39] – they may then become the core of the new army. However, until their 'political community' of reference has achieved control of the state, they remain a non-statutory military.

For Central Africa this has deep implications. If, indeed, state-building in the region has only produced 'quasi-states', then, by putting the military in relation to the institutional configuration of the state to which it belongs, one is likely to come to the conclusion that the military has reached no more than the stage of a 'quasi-army'. In such a condition civil-military relations remain relations between armed groups and non-armed sections of society. They may also become simply a mode of insertion of uniformed individuals in prevailing informal networks of personal and group relationships, as we shall analyse below.

1.4 Civil-military Relations Theory and its Relevance to Africa

Any discussion of civil-military relations in Central Africa must begin with the consideration that the African military remains a little studied subject overall, with gaps in research analysis being even more pronounced for the non-English (mostly Francophone and Lusophone) worlds. As regards geographic coverage, for years, English language publications on Central Africa remained restricted to translations from French and Flemish studies, with little research being carried out in the English speaking world, with the exceptions of a 1982 analysis of French military influence on francophone Africa by Robin Luckham and of Patrick Manning's broad overview of a century

39 Special cases, such as the two competing armies of Rwanda and the Congolese FAZ and AFPL, will be dealt with in depth in the relevant case study

of francophone African history.[40] In France, Central Africa is a research area only with regard to the questionable role *La Françafrique* plays in national foreign policy.[41] The military discussed in this context is the French national one as far as it is involved in African domestic politics. Belgian research is limited to its former African colony (Congo) and protectorates (Rwanda, Burundi), through area research conducted by the Congo Museum in Tervuren and the Congo Research network centred at Leuven University.[42]

In terms of substance, some anthropological work on the pre-colonial warrior cultures of Anglophone Africa is available,[43] as well as a number of studies on the relevance of colonial campaigns in French historiography[44] and some historical accounts dedicated to African warfare at the tactical level,[45] leading, in the more recent period, to a few – usually pessimistic – assessments of the military value of African armed forces today.[46] However, it is only as of the mid-1980s, with a large range of works published in response to a long decade of *coups d'état* stretching from the late 1970s to the early 1990s,[47] that authors have begun approaching African military history in a

40 Luckham, Robin (1982), *French Militarism in Africa*, Review of African Political Economy, 24, 55-84; Manning, Patrick (1998), Francophone sub-Saharan Africa, 1880-1995, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge

41 Verschave, François-Xavier (1998), Françafrique : Le plus long scandale de la République, Editions Stock, Paris

42 www.africamuseum.be/home; http://congoresearchnetwork.com/

43 Ajayi, JFA (1965), *Professional Warriors in Nineteenth Century Yoruba Politics*, Tarikh, 1, 72-81; Thornton, John K (1999), Warfare in Atlantic Africa, 1500-1800, UCL Press, London; New York; Uzoigwe, G N (1977), *The Warrior and the State in Precolonial Africa*, Journal of Asian and African Studies, 12, 1, 20-47

44 See Frémeaux, Jacques (2009), De quoi fut fait l'empire: Les guerres coloniales au XIXe siècle, CNRS éditions, Paris; Joly, Vincent (2009), Guerres d'Afrique. 130 ans de guerres coloniales. L'expérience française, Presses universitaires de Rennes, Rennes

45 Arlinghaus, Bruce E. and Pauline H. Baker (1986), African Armies, Evolution and Capabilities, Westview Press, Boulder, Colo; Clapham, Christopher S (1998), African Guerrillas, James Currey, Oxford; Edgerton, Robert B. (2002), Africa's Armies: from Honor to Infamy, Westview Press, Boulder, Colo.

46 'African military forces can be eminently successful when there is an absence of effective resistance', Thom, W. G. (1984), *Sub-Saharan Africa's Changing Military Capabilities*, Armed Forces & Society, 11, 1, 32-58 p.39

47 Assensoh, Akwasi B and Yvette M Alex-Assensoh (2001), African Military History and Politics: Coups and Ideological Incursions, 1900-Present, Palgrave, New York; Babatope, Ebenezer (1981), Coups--Africa and the barrack revolts, Fourth Dimension Publishers, Enugu, Nigeria; Bienen, Henry and Nicolas Van de Walle (1990), *Poverty, the Coup Trap, and the Seizure of Executive Power*, World Politics, 42, 151-183, ; Bienen and Van de Walle (1990);

'Delbrückian manner', connecting the military history to political, and social history.[48] This literature has been valuable in that it attempted for the first time to cast a light on the relationship between the military and the civilian power in Africa. However, it never reached the crux of the matter as most of the works were based on the Huntington premise that those two powers constitute distinct realms, whereas they do not in the African reality as we shall demonstrate below.

The Rwandan genocide and the two Congo Wars stretching from 1996 to 2003 have triggered a resurgence of research on the part of francophone Central Africa that overlaps with the Great Lakes region. This research, carried out for a large part by Belgian and Dutch scholars, has yielded valuable empirical findings and clues on armed groups and the questionable role of statutory forces in the DRC.[49] However, this research, as well as a large range

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Brömmelhörster, Jörn and Wolf-Christian Paes (2003), The Military as an Economic Actor: Soldiers in Business, Palgrave Macmillan, New York; Clark, John F (2007), *The Decline of the African Military Coup*, Journal of Democracy, 18, 3, 141-155; Crocker, Chester A (1974), *Military Dependence: The Colonial Legacy in Africa*, The Journal of Modern African Studies, 12, 2, 265-286; Decalo, Samuel (1990), Coups and Army Rule in Africa: Motivations and Constraints, Yale University Press, New Haven; Gershoni, Yekutiel (1996), *The Changing Pattern of Military Takeovers in Sub-Saharan Africa*, Armed Forces & Society, 23, 2, 235-248; Jenkins, Craig J and Augustine J Kposowa (1992), *The Political Origins of African Military Coups: Ethnic Competition, Military Centrality, and The Struggle Over The Postcolonial State*, International Studies Quarterly, 36, 3, 271-291; Jenkins and Kposowa (1992); Luttwak, Edward N (1979), Coup d'Etat: A Practical Handbook, Harvard University Press, Cambridge MA; McGowan, Patrick J (2004), Coups and Conflict in West Africa, 1955-2004, US State Department, W\ashington DC; Nordlinger, Eric A. (1977), Soldiers in Politics: Military Coups and Governments, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ; Onwumechili, Chuka (1998), African Democratization and Military Coups, Praeger, Westport; Welch, Claude E Jr (1975), *Continuity and Discontinuity in African Military Organisation*, The Journal of Modern African Studies, 13, 2, 229-248; Nordlinger (1977); Thompson, William R (1975), *Regime Vulnerability and the Military Coup*, Comparative Politics, 7, 4, 459-488, Hutchful, Eboe, Bathily, Abdoulaye (1998), The Military and Militarism in Africa, CODESRIA, Dakar

48 See in particular Auma-Osolo, A (1980), *Objective African Military Control: A New Paradigm in Civil-Military Relations*, Journal of Peace Research, 17, 1, 29-46, and more recently as part of the New Wars discussion Jackson, Paul (2007), *Is Africa Seeing Fourth Generation Warfare, or is the Model Flawed?*, Small Wars & Insurgencies, 18, June, 145-160; see also the seminal work by Delbrück, Hans (1985), History of the Art of War within the Framework of Political History, Volume IV: The Dawn of Modern Warfare, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln NE, first issued in 1900-1920

49 See for example Vlassenroot, Koen (2008), *Armed Groups and Militias in Eastern DR Congo*, Lecture Series on African Security, 5, ; Vlassenroot (2008) Vlassenroot, Koen (2006), *A Societal View on Violence and War*, in Kaarsholm, Preben, Violence, Politial Culture and Development in Africa James Currey, Oxford, 49-65; Vlassenroot and Raeymaekers (2005). This author has also benefited from exchanges with researcher Judith Verweijen in the course of completing her PhD dissertation(Utrecht University) on armed groups in Kivu

of ‘policy studies’ meant to provide much needed advice to practitioners, remains rather narrow in nature and does not relate developments in the field to a broader historical analysis of Congolese state formation. By contrast with the DRC, the Rwandese military has been the subject of little dedicated research, despite the hundreds of books and articles on inter-ethnic relations published after the genocide.[50] Cameroon, the third country to be covered by the present study, is part of a huge sub-region of (mostly) Francophone Central Africa – stretching north to south from the Chad/Libyan border to the Zambezi River and east to west from Burundi to the Atlantic Ocean – that remains utterly under-researched. A (small) number of books in English or French works do claim to cover ‘Francophone Africa’, in their research on social and political developments[51] or *coups d’état*,[52] the role of the military in business,[53] and, more recently, post-conflict security sector reform.[54] However, in all of these cases, research bears exclusively or overwhelmingly on West Africa; the former French Congo, Chad, Centrafrique, Gabon and Cameroon, actually constituting the bigger part of Central Africa, remained in a blind spot.[55] This pattern is part of a broader neglect of Francophone and Central Africa in social research.[56]

The bulk of the literature on the African military – and in this, there is no difference between Francophone and Anglophone approaches – addresses its

50 Part of this gap is currently being filled by the research of Frank Rusagara for his thesis on Rwandan military integration, at SOAS London

51 Kirk-Greene, Anthony and Daniel Bach (1995), State and Society in Francophone Africa Since Independence, Macmillan, Basingstoke

52 Assensoh and Alex-Assensoh (2001); McGowan (2004)

53 Brömmelhörster and Paes (2003)

54 Bagayoko, Niagalé (2010), *Security Systems in Francophone Africa*, IDS Research Report, 64, ; Bagayoko, Niagalé, et al. (2010), La réforme des systèmes de sécurité et de justice en Afrique francophone, Organisation internationale de la Francophonie, Paris

55 The volumes edited by Niagalé Bagayoko cover Gabon and Cameroon cursorily on the basis of limited empirical research carried out in those two countries.

56 The most extensive study on African political culture based on data collected for the Afrobarometer covers only one francophone country, which is not in Central Africa (Senegal), and only one Anglophone country (Uganda) in the sub-region, see Logan, Carolyn (2013), *The Roots of Resilience: Exploring Popular Support for African Traditional AUthorities*, African Affairs, 112, 448, 353-376

professional and sociological role through the lens of 'Huntingtonian style' civil-military relations (CMR) theory.[57] This was true of the 1980s and 1990s literature on *coups d'état*. This remains largely true of more recent, security sector reform (SSR)-related work. An otherwise excellent study such as Naison Ngoma's 'CMR in Africa: Unchartered Waters', seems to suffer from a difficulty in explaining why the African military hardly resembles 'Huntingtonian style' constructs and is searching for a way to achieve a Western style military in Africa.[58] Similarly, the most recent major study on CMR, which includes a chapter on three Anglophone African countries (Botswana, Ghana and Tanzania), focusses on civilian control of a separate military world.[59]

In Huntingtonian theory, as developed by the master himself in his seminal work[60] or subsequently refined by other scholars, the military appears as a separate corporate group, distinct from the civilian world, and civilian control or oversight of the military becomes the core problem to address. The boundary between the civil and military realms forms the base of CMR. As James Gow puts it, 'this boundary is contained in the concept itself, and it provides for the legitimacy of the military'.[61] The 'Huntingtonian doctrine' of civilian control, based on the theory, derives from this understanding, including nuances that were suggested by other scholars such as Morris Janowitz, Samuel Finer, Peter Feaver, and more recently Rebecca Schiff.[62] To put it in

57 See Welch, Claude (1976), Civilian Control of the Military, State University of New York Press, New York; Welch (1975); on Africa see Decalo, Samuel (1998), Civil-military Relations in Africa, Florida Academic Press, Gainesville, p.122, the section is a reprint of an article from 1989, like the rest of the book none written after 1990; for more recent examples see Harries-Jenkins, G (1990), *The Concept of Military Professionalism*, Defense & Security Analysis, 6, 2, 117-130 and Feaver, Peter D (2003), Armed Servants, Agency, Oversight, and Civil-Military Relations, Harvard University Press, Cambridge MA

58 Ngoma, Naison (2010), *Civil-Military Relations in Africa: Navigating Unchartered Waters*, Arfrican Security Review, 15, 4, 98-111

59 Barany, Zoltan (2012), The Military in a Changing State, Princeton University Press, Princeton, Ch.9, pp.275-300

60 Huntington (1957)

61 Gow (1992), p.26

62 Feaver (1996); Finer, Samuel E and Jay Stanley (2002), The Man on Horseback: the Role of the Military in Politics, Transaction Publishers, ; Janowitz, Morris (1964), The

simple terms, all of them agree, and for most cases adequately so, that the military must be strong enough to do what civilians want it to do and sufficiently obedient to do nothing else. They all define the military as one element of the state, but one supposed to implement rather than formulate security policy.[63]

Whereas Samuel Huntington set the institutional model for CMR, Morris Janowitz and Peter Feaver stressed the sociological perspective, emphasising the attitude of the individual performing military service as opposed to the institutional component, and the element of agency in the relationship between the soldier and the political leader. According to them, institutions can only ensure loyalty if the individual officer adopts loyalty as a core value.[64] All authors agree on the elementary division between the civilian and the military realms. Rebecca Schiff, seemingly departing from this classic approach, actually maintains it by negating the existence of a bipolar relationship and proposing a tripolar one instead. Her model adds one more actor to the scenery, to differentiate the civilian political elite, the military, and the citizenry as distinct actors. As we shall see below, had she added a further differentiation between the officer corps and the rank and file, she would have come close to the Central African reality. Unfortunately her broad view from the Americas – over Israel, India and Pakistan – did not address the African continent.[65]

Professional Soldier: A Social And Political Portrait, Free Press of Glencoe, New York; Schiff, Rebecca L (2008), The Military and Domestic Politics: A Concordance Theory of Civil-Military Relations, Routledge, New York

63 Houngnikpo, Mathurin C (2012), *Africa's Militaries: A Missing Link in Democratic Transitions*, Africa Security Brief, 17, p.4

64 A variant of civil-military integration was offered for the case of former communist countries by authors such as Herspring, Dale R (1978), Civil-Military Relations in Communist Systems, Westview, Boulder, and Kolkowicz, Roman and Andrzej Korbonski (1982), Soldiers, Peasants, and Bureaucrats: Civil-military Relations in Communist and Modernizing Societies, G. Allen & Unwin, London

65 Ben Meir, Yehuda (1995), Civil Military Relations in Israel, Columbia University Press, New York, tried to demonstrate an overlap between the two spheres using the example of Israel, where the division may blur but still exists

The problem with 'Huntingtonian type approaches' for the analysis of Africa lies in the underlying assumption of a separation between civilian and military actors. Such a separation, as correct as it is for much of the world, is neither part of African military doctrine, nor its practice, and nor is a part of the self-perception of most African soldiers. The fact that the African military publicly claims to adhere to the 'Huntingtonian' model obscures the situation. Actually, the civil-military division underpinning analyses of the relationship of the military to political power holders has little relevance in Africa, where other kinds of loyalties and fault lines matter and where the real place of the military within the community and the state is far from what it appears to be. This *problématique* is indirectly addressed in the literature on neopatrimonial and clientelist structures, where soldiers are occasionally mentioned as examples of façade statehood and alternative hierarchical arrangements. The strong stand of high ranking officers in patron-client relations within the military has for example been described by Alex Weingrod[66] and others, who see patronage networks as informal structures running parallel to the hierarchical structure.[67] However, this work will rather follow a path initiated by scholars such as Shmuel Eisenstadt, who hesitate to recognise patron-client relations as types of social organisation, being more inclined to see them as ways to manage the flow of resources and of interpersonal interaction and exchanges in society.[68] Eisenstadt's analysis, however, is not specific to the military.

66 Weingrod, Alex (1968), *Patrons, Patronage, and Political Parties*, Comparative Studies in Society and History, 7, 4, 377-400

67 Austen, Ralph A and Jonathan Derrick (1999), Middlemen of the Cameroon Rivers: The Duala and their Hinterland, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge; see also Haskin, Jeanne M (2005), The Tragic State of the Congo: From Decolonization to Dictatorship, Algora Publishing, New York and Chrétien, Jean-Pierre (1982), *Féodalité ou féodalisation du Burundi sous le mandat belge*, in Vansina, Jan, Études Africaines offertes à Henri Brunschwig EHESS, Paris,

68 Eisenstadt, Shmuel N and Louis Roniger (1980), *Patron-Client Relations as a Model of Structuring Social Exchange*, Comparative Studies in Society and History, 22, 1, 42-77

Seen in this light, the three-digit number of successful or failed *coups d'état* on the continent in the last 50 years does not indicate a rivalry between the civilian part of the elite and its military peers, but that it is the expression of a constant intra-elite struggle for power and wealth.[69] If military takeovers hardly ever produced military regimes in Africa, it is because most juntas had a strong civilian component. Actually, many of those who wore military uniforms as they acceded to power swapped them for civilian clothes and titles at a later date, or combined civilian and military titles and uniforms, or even alternated between them according to needs and expediency.[70] Soldiers were pursuing their interests, but they had allies as well as opponents, both within and without the military. Authoritarianism in Africa was based on an intra-elite 'civilian-military alliance'.[71] In sum, *coups d'état* were and are the expression of intra-elite struggles, not of a civil-military standoff.[72] Further, the dominant pattern at the top is reproduced at the bottom of the social ladder where rank and file soldiers constitute a kind of 'Lumpenmilitariat', which is often sociologically closer to the 'Lumpenproletariat' from which it stems than to its commanding officers.[73] Loyalties, therefore, do not go primarily to the army corps, but to

69 Andreas Mehler describes this as the fundamental African 'insecurity trap', see Mehler, Andreas (2008), Breaking the "Insecurity Trap"? How Violence and Counter-violence are Perpetuated in Elite Power Struggles, GIGA Working Paper Series, Hamburg

70 For Central African examples, Pierre Nkurunziza of Burundi, Denis Sassou-Nguesso of Congo Brazzaville, François Bozizé of CAR and Idriss Déby Itno of Chad swiftly change between Western suits, folkloristic head gear, and uniforms

71 Thiriot, Celine *La place des militaires dans les régimes post-transition d'Afrique subsaharienne: la difficile resectorisation*, Revue Internationale de Politique Comparee, 15, 1, 15-34, p.17

72 A few voices, such as Valenzuela, Camilo (1985), *A Note on the Military and Social Science Theory*, Third World Quarterly, 7, 1, 132-143, hinted at this permeability at the tip of the wave of *coups d'état*, but this stream of thought was not pursued

73 *Lumpenmilitariat* as a deduction from Marx's *Lumpenproletariat*, including: 'vagabonds, discharged soldiers, discharged prisoners, escaped galley slaves, swindlers, pickpockets, tricksters, gamblers, brothel keepers, porters, beggars, in short the whole indefinite, disintegrated, tossed mass', Marx, Karl (1972 (1852)), Der 18. Brumaire des Luis Bonaparte, Dietz Verlag, Berlin (DDR), p.161, paraphrased from the German

other forms of community: in this case the chain of command becomes, as will be explained in chapter two, a private dyadic relationship.[74]

Another basic differentiation made throughout CMR thought is between the two roles of the military: one functional (combat) and one socio-political. As Mathurin Houngnikpo argues, this differentiation is only partly valid for sub-Saharan Africa where a long lasting warrior tradition among the carriers of arms, both high and low, is responsible for an overlapping of the two roles through the non-combat functions of the military.[75] Accordingly, the African warrior was more integrated in his community both politically and economically. His specialisation on the use of force did not estrange him from his people. This feature has a direct implication for the understanding by Africans of the role of their armed forces. In Central Africa, like in most other parts of the continent, the military is expected to fulfil core tasks in supporting economic development for the benefit of the (national) community.[76] In addition to the already ambitious technical objectives of ensuring security in adverse conditions, the African military's role thus extends even beyond that of Western regular forces. This obviously reflects a cardinally different understanding of the role of the military from what Western 'Huntingtonian' comprehension would allow. Consequently, the yardstick that must be applied to judge the

74 Bangoura, Dominique (1993), *Armées et défis démocratiques en Afrique*, Afrique 2000: revue trimestrielle, January - March, 12, 111-122, p.116

75 Houngnikpo, Mathurin C (2010), Guarding the Guardians: Civil-Military Relations and Democratic Governance in Africa, Ashgate, Farnham

76 For the Congo see the Loi Organique du portant Organisation et Fonctionnement Des Forces Armées N° 11/012 of 11 August, an army of development 'that contributes to the creation of national wealth, namely through production, and work of public interest'; the Rwandan Loi Fondamentale n° 11 du 1er juin 1995, defines in her preamble, p. 3, national reconciliation, tolerance, and solidarity in the pursuit of the re-construction and development of the country; in Cameroon, without reference to a law, the status as an army of development is the standard claim of the MoD, see *l'Armée Camerounaise: un outil au service du développement de la nation*, http://mindefdivcom.com

Central African armed forces against their own claims must take the measure of both their military professionalism and their collective social role.[77]

Those key sociological features of the (Central) African military are compounded by contextual and policy realities, two of which are particularly important here. First, in francophone Central Africa, everyone who dons a uniform and carries a gun is indiscriminately called a *homme habillé*, a 'liveried man', but even if he statutorily belongs to the regular armed forces, this does not mean that he can perform as a soldier. And even if he is well-trained at the tactical level and can fight individually, this does not mean that the organised whole to which he belongs – the national army – can properly fulfil its functions.[78] It is therefore important not to generalise too quickly from the attitude of an individual soldier to the role that the army plays in the state and society as a whole.

The military's *raison d'être* in Central Africa, in sum, characterised by the importance of individual over group relationships, the permeability of the civilian and military realms, and a mission that goes beyond security, is at quite a variance from what Huntingtonian theory would postulate. The implications of such a different understanding for the possibility of consolidating Weberian (or even democratic) forms of states in Central Africa have to be thoroughly investigated.

77 The prevalence of this view is reflected by the literature, see Bruneau, Thomas C. and Scott D. Tollefson (2006), Who Guards the Guardians and How: Democratic Civil-military Relations, University of Texas Press, Austin; Danopoulos, Constantine P (1988), Military Disengagement from Politics, Routledge, London; Danopoulos, Constantine P., et al. (2004), Civil-military Relations, Nation Building, and National Identity, Praeger, Westport; Decalo (1998); Diamond, Larry Jay and Marc F. Plattner (1996), Civil-military Relations and Democracy, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore; Koonings, Kees and Dirk Kruijt (2002), Political Armies: the Military and Nation Building in the Age of Democracy, Zed Books, London; Mouiche, Ibrahim (2005), Autorités traditionelles et democratisation au Cameroun, Lit Verlag, Münster; Nordlinger (1977); Onwumechili (1998)

78 In fact, the main task of the Gabonese military is the yearly parade on Independence Day. The government is protected by a separate guard, and by Moroccan forces, and the security of the country is assured by a considerable French garrison

2 Methodology

2.1 Case Studies

Three case studies will help us to understand the dynamics of state-military development in Central African countries and the differences between them. They bear on the DRC (also designated in this work as 'Congo'),[79] Cameroon and Rwanda. Those three countries have been selected as representing a good cross-section of situations to be encountered in the region as their trajectories of state formation and state-building differ substantially, as does the role of their military in relation to the political institutions.

Alone among the states of francophone Central Africa, Rwanda harbours a pre-colonial history of both state formation that continued until the construction of European imperial empires of the late 19th century and of a professional military. As the parenthesis of colonial times and the early years of independence were closed by the 1994 genocide, the military has assumed a key role in Rwanda's modern state-building, largely combining political and security functions in the hands of the same elites.

At the other end of the spectrum, state-building has been a much more untidy process in the Congo, a country that had no pre-colonial history of state formation. Fifty years after independence, the DRC remains the symbol of a 'fragile state', kept in intensive care by the international community for that reason. It is only a period of about half of the years under the reign of President Mobutu that Congolese veterans describe with nostalgic dazzlement and pride as a 'Golden Age' of their military. Events in the East of the country since the mid-1990s have demonstrated how tenuous a process military

79 As the country has changed names several times since independence, the term 'Congo' will be used to refer to characteristics or developments that are not specific to a particular phase of its history. Otherwise the respective names of the period under discussion will be used (ex. DRC, Zaïre). The DRC is not to be confused with the much smaller Congo on the northern bank of the river, the Republic of Congo

formation remains in the Congo. A large number of diverse military actors have in the meantime played a variety of roles from keepers of the regime to sources of outright chaos in the country.

Cameroon represents yet a third kind of configuration, sharing Congo's absence of pre-colonial state experience but, like Rwanda, boasting an uncontested 'national army', at least since the early 1970s. Its relative stability since independence appears to indicate success in its state-building endeavour, although some analysts caution against too optimistic an assessment.[80] Closest in appearance to the 'Huntingtonian model' as regards its structures and professionalism, the Cameroonian armed forces have nevertheless been subordinated to the political leadership in a significantly different way from what Western standard civil-military theory would suggest.

2.2 A Two-pillar Approach

War Studies is by nature interdisciplinary. The present study is no exception, drawing in particular on two branches of knowledge: history and political sociology.

The historical foundation of the approach is based on one essential distinction made above between state formation and state-building. As Charles Tilly has demonstrated, and scholars like Victoria Tin-Bor have confirmed, there is no single path to the creation, disappearance and shape of states. There are, however, two interdependent constants in the process of state formation, which lie in the ability of the political leadership to respond to external and internal threats by adopting gradually cumulative 'state strengthening' measures, and in their ability to muster for that purpose a more and more coherent, unified, responsive and obedient military. The external

80 ICG (2010a); ICG (2010b), *Cameroon: the Dangers of a Fracturing Regime*, Africa Report, 161, np

dimension has taken the form of militarisation and conquest; the internal one that of domestic administration and institution-building. The same two parameters will be used to analyse the development of Central African state systems and their military.

The approach in terms of political sociology is based on two intellectual currents. The first one is characterised by a now fairly large body of literature describing the dynamics of social and political relations in African states as 'patronage systems', where a person's ability to access a job, money, favours and consideration is not due to his or her performance in a particular art or trade according to objective standards, but on his or her loyalty to the 'chief' who decides on promotions and demotions, rewards and punishments.[81] The system is steered from the top, but is cascaded at each level of society, each person being at the same time the client of someone and the patron of others, down to the lowest level. The impact of this politico-cultural context on military ethics and professionalism will, in most cases, be determinant in explaining the army's relationship to the political authority.

The second current is that branch of political sociology which, on the basis of the pioneer work done by Almond and Verba immediately after World War II,[82] has convincingly demonstrated the importance of political culture in

81 The literature on clientele and patronage is extensive. A few titles particularly relevant to Africa include: Boone, Catherine (1997), *States and Ruling Classes in Post-Colonial Africa: The Enduring Contradictions of Power*, in Migdal, Joel S, et al., State power and social forces: Domination and transformation in the Third World Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 108-140; Chabal, Patrick (2009), Africa: the Politics of Suffering and Smiling, Zed Books & University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, London and Pietermaritzburg; Chabal, Patrick and Jean-Pascal Daloz (1999), Africa Works: Disorder as Political Instrument, Indiana University Press, Bloomington; Herbst, Jeffrey (1999), *Warlord politics and African states*, American Political Science Review, 93, 2, 470-471; Herbst, JI (2000), States and power in Africa: comparative lessons in authority and control, Princeton Univ Press, ; Jackson, Robert H and Carl G Rosberg (1982), Personal Rule in Black Africa: Prince, Autocrat, Prophet, Tyrant, University of California Press, Berkeley; Okruhlik, Gwenn (1999), *Rentier Wealth, Unruly Law, and the Rise of Opposition*, Comparative Politics, 51, 295-315, ; Wirtz, Albert (1999), *Körper, Kopf und Bauch. Zum Problem des kolonialen Staates im subsaharischen Afrika*, in Reinhard, Wolfgang, Die Verstaatlichung der Welt, Oldenbourg, München, 253-237

82 Almond, Gabriel A and Sidney Verba (1965), The Civic Culture, Little, Brown and Company, Boston,see also Lezhnev, Sasha (2011), *Facts and Opportunities on Conflict*

explaining collective political behaviour. Political culture is defined by Lucien Pye as a steady and persistent pattern of conduct to which all social actors are highly attuned. According to him it represents a

> set of attitudes, beliefs and sentiments, which give order and meaning to a political process and which provide the underlying assumptions and rules that govern behaviour in the political system.[83]

Authors such as Ian Taylor and Paul Williams, but in particular Ali Mazrui, have demonstrated the resilience of politico-cultural patterns which simultaneously result from and maintain a very strongly hierarchic and exclusionist political culture among African elites.[84] Having said this, Mazrui has in the same breath cautioned against interpretations suggesting that actors' behaviour only responded to cultural path dependencies,[85] highlighting instead the cross-cultural effects of colonialism on post-colonial political culture and suggesting that the two heritages had merged into something new, negating cultural determinism in the course.[86] Hence, it would be thoroughly erroneous, according to Pierre Bourdieu, to reduce the leaders' choices of their

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Minerals and Livelihoods, Enough Project blog, 12 August, ; Inglehart, Ronald (1997), Modernization and Postmodernization: Cultural, Economic, and PoliticalCchange in 43 Societies, Princeton University Press, Princeton; Inglehart, Robert and Wayne E Baker (2000), *Modernization, Cultural change and the Persistence of Traditional Values*, American Sociological Review, 65, 1, 19-51; Ngoma-Binda, P (2010), Democratic Republic of Congo Democracy and Political Participation, Open Society Initiative for South Africa, Johannesburg

83 Pye, Lucien (1968), *Political Culture*, in International Enyclopedia of the Social Sciences Free Press, New York, p.218

84 See on resilience Mazrui, Ali A (1967a), *The Monarchical Tendency in African Political Culture*, The British Journal of Sociology, 18, 231-250, Mazrui, Ali A (1977), *Soldiers as Traditionalizers: Military Rule and the Re-Africanization of Africa*, World Politics, 28, 2, 246-272, see also Geertz, Cliffort (1973 (2000)), The Interpretation of Cultures, Basic Books, New York Cornelis, Carlo (2003), *The Crippled Bula Matari: the Roots of the Congolese War Economy*, Review of International Social Questions, June, ; Inglehart and Baker (2000); Ngoma-Binda (2010); Taylor, Ian and Paul D Williams (2008), *Political Culture, State Elites and Regional Security in West Africa*, Journal of Contemporary African Studies, 26, 2, 137-149

85 Path dependency is here used in a figurative sense. The term was 'imported' from economic to social sciences by Pierson, Paul (2000), *Increasing Returns, Path Dependence, and the Study of Politics*, American Political Science Review, 94, 2, 251-267

86 Mazrui (1999)

habitus merely in terms of rational strategy and cynical calculation.[87] Political culture is as much an outcome of continuity as it is a result of political learning. Political learning happens at the individual level as socialisation and at collective level as institutional adaptation.

2.3 Epistemological Boundaries

> History is a clock that people use to tell the political and cultural time of the day; where they have been, what they have been, what they are [and] where they still must go and what they still must be.[88]

The linear approach of history encapsulated in this often quoted image by John Hendrik Clarke, the bedrock of modernisation theories, endeavours to measure political development along a linear model of development, which is chronologically ordered and knows starting points and logical endings. However, it remains a model, comfortably attuned to the human desire to simplify the understanding of one's intricate politico-cultural milieu, but which may block sight of a reality comprising immense variability. As soon as such problematic simplification becomes the guiding star of decision-making, it risks narrowing the observer's thought processes rather than opening his/her mind to broader and deeper understanding. If everything is perceived as happening in a natural sequence, everything must have an origin, a relative status, and an aim. The *origin* is then explained by causality: everything that ever had the slightest impact on a certain outcome must have been causal to it. The *status* is what one arbitrarily declares to exist relative to one's aims, suggesting that a

87 Bourdieu, Pierre (1986), *The Forms of Capital*, in Richardson, J G, Handbook for Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education Greenwood Press, Stanford, 241-258, p.257

88 Often cited without any reference as the remark of John Henrik Clark, the former doyen of Africanists in the United States

final result has not yet materialised; and the *result* only exists in the form of uncertain predictions, or – for past events – with the benefit of hindsight. Predictions rarely come true if they are specific, hindsight always knows best, and Chronos becomes the prison guard of imagination.

Modernisation theorists, starting from Karl Marx, had a point as long as economic, political, and cultural change appeared to proceed in concert, and as long as this hypothesis was not universally tested. The advent of increasingly complex post-industrial societies in the West and the spread of a post-modern political culture have already largely undermined the linkage between the economic infrastructure and the political superstructure at the heart of the theory. African developments query the theory even more as the region has experienced a delay in the development of modern states relative to other parts of the world that had suffered from comparable difficulties when the states there emerged from colonial rule.[89]

In contrast to modernisation theories, this thesis starts from the assumption and demonstration that the reality on the ground may not represent a mere step of development on a known road towards a pre-defined 'end of history'.[90] Instead, an assessment of African affairs should rest on a detailed collection and analysis of empirical observations of what we find on the ground – not what we should expect to find from a liberal-democratic perspective.[91] This approach will enable us to demonstrate the result of the 'persistence' or, depending on the standpoint adopted, of the 'resilience' of cultural values in

89 South Korea was a poorhouse in comparison to Kenya in 1965; – in 2012 its economy is forty times the Kenyan one; and Zaire under Mobutu is an even clearer illustration of the fact that 'modernisation is probabilistic, not deterministic'; Inglehart and Baker (2000), p.49

90 Prematurely declared by Fukuyama, Francis (1992), The End of History and the Last Man, Free Press, New York

91 Wiuff Moe, Louise (2010), Addressing State Fragility in Africa - A Need to Challenge the Established 'wisdom'?, Finnish Institute of International Affairs, Helsinki

spite of political and economic changing environments.[92] Therefore, if modernisation occurs, this will be a severely limited process because the 'broad cultural heritage of a society leaves an imprint on values that endures' despite modernisation.[93]

Like Mazrui, this dissertation will adopt a 'non-essentialist' view of political culture, in other words, it considers (political) cultures as changeable over time and largely permeable to one another. It is indeed undeniable that African political culture as it is observable today is a hybrid of traditional, specifically local forms of political cultures and of Western political culture transmitted initially by colonialism and increasingly by the globalisation of communications. This also means that different groups in African societies will be more or less deeply affected by changes in value systems, or even that the same groups – or even the same individuals – can be affected at one level but not at others. This may result in patterns of behaviour that may seem schizophrenic for outside observers, but that are well-captured in the Blochian concept of 'non-simultaneity'.[94] Non-simultaneity applies both to inter-subjective relations between individuals and to relations between polities. It is a condition that transcends political reality, even if often unnoticed. Accordingly, individual or communities' behaviour can respond to a pre-modern rationale, at one particular moment, and to a modern or post-modern one a moment later, without them perceiving this as an aberration. It can also mean that some communities on a particular territory remain entirely impermeable to modern ideas, whereas others embrace at least some features of modernity. This of course opens the question of whether Western ideas of modernity are the only

92 See Inglehart and Baker (2000)

93 Inglehart and Baker (2000), p.19

94 This concept is translated from 'Gleichzeitigkeit des Ungleichzeitigen' (literally: simultaneity of the a-contemporary), to which we will return in Chapters 2 and 6, Bloch, Ernst (1962), Erbschaft dieser Zeit, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt

and universally valid ones. If a coexistence of different modules of political agency is possible, then there is a possibility that alternative manifestations of modernity may exist in parallel. In this study, we shall therefore refrain from suggesting, as Robert Cooper did in a hotly debated piece in 2002, that some states are forever trapped in their situation as 'failed States', that others have become 'modern states' but can transform no more, and that yet others have safely reached the stage of 'postmodern states'.[95]

To give appropriate consideration to this reality, this work reflects political history as a system of modules that may be found in a potentially infinite range of combinations. If anything, a more modular approach to history enables analysts to deconstruct social configurations as the results of deliberate discreet choices of their target communities. From there, it is actually straightforward to accept that Early Modern forms of warfare can coincide with the use of satellite phones and machine guns. In this understanding, the so-called 'New Wars' in Africa are actually no more than Early Modern forms of warfare transplanted in a late 20th - early 21st century context.[96] This down-to-earth comprehension needs to be translated into politico-historical analysis, demonstrating that pre-Cleisthenesian political culture can be combined with a neo-patrimonial political order and post-modern liberal ideology.[97] In geographic areas that do not have functioning states or never had them, one cannot assume that there is an 'order' in its Western specific sense.

95 Cooper (1997)

96 One particularly striking feature of contemporary warfare in Central Africa and also European Early Modern war is the seemingly limitless violence against civilians, see Lorenz, Maren (2007), Das Rad der Gewalt, Boehlau, Cologne, p.246, and the presence of 'phantom soldiers', see Kaiser, David (2000), Politics and War: European Conflict from Philip II to Hitler, Harvard University Press, Cambridge Mass, p.120. A linear view of history resulted in a misinterpretation of such wars as 'New Wars', see for a discussion Ellis, Stephen (2003), *The Old Roots of Africa's New Wars*, Internationale Politik und Gesellschaft, 2, np; Newman, Edward (2004), *The 'New Wars' Debate: A Historical Perspective is Needed*, Security Dialogue, 35, 2, 173

97 The reforms of Cleisthenes in 5th Century B.C. Athens reorganised the *polis,* moving away from the concept of *genos*, the right of blood, to the *demos*, the right of the place, thus eradicating tribal power structures, and promoting an abstract and more inclusive concept of the state.

African states, in this context, may nevertheless be judged by the standards they have set for themselves. Via their original demand for membership in the United Nations and their more recent espousal of the international state-building agenda, all of them, including Central African ones, have confirmed their claim to be, or at least their desire to become, at minimum Weberian states. They can therefore be held accountable to the modern state standards.[98] At declaratory level, African states have taken a further important step in 2007 by adopting the landmark 'African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance', which entails a binding commitment to the principle of democratic statehood.[99] Many of them, however, have yet to transform this political engagement into a legal commitment.[100] The declaration, therefore, provides us with a benchmark, but one to be used cautiously.[101]

In this study, the use of norms related to the democratic state and the characteristics of civil-military relations will therefore be used as an analytical, rather than a normative tool, taking into account the evolving reality of the African continent. Examining how far the aspirational commitment to the democratic state has been transformed into practice will enable us to more closely reflect the reality of Central Africa.

98 See Ayoob, Mohammed (1995), Third World Security Predicament, State Making, Regional Conflict, and the International System, Lynne Rienner, Boulder, p.3

99 African Union (2007), Addis Ababa

100 Most Central African states have signed the Charter, whereas only Cameroon and Chad had ratified it by 2013.

101 The general denominator of the discussion on failed states is the assumption that the citizens of such states lose their formerly existing protection and restraints normally provided by the state. Unfortunately, the map of Africa's weak and failed states, a product of the Harvard University failed states project, in spite of its own clear definitions, leaves out the Central African weak states, including Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, and Congo (Brazzaville), see Schatzberg, Michael G (2001), Political Legitimacy in Middle Africa, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, pp.47, 55

2.4 Access to and Interpretation of Sources

Access to resources for the present research has been a challenge. As discussed above (section 1.4), studies on the military in Francophone Central Africa are few and far between. Material had to be extracted piecemeal in tangential fields such as area studies and recent policy work on SSR. Primary data for the countries chosen for this study were similarly scarce and difficult to access, given the sensitivity of the subject. Written and systematically ordered material on the colonial, the immediate post-independence period and, in some cases, even more recent times is only available in archives in France and Belgium, the former colonial powers who are still the key security partners of the respective countries. The *Archives militaires* in Château de Vincennes and the Foreign Ministry Archives in Brussels have been systematically exploited.

Research in Cameroon yielded a few sources held by the National Archives and to the extent practical the University II in Yaoundé, but no additional official archives since the Cameroonian Ministry of Defence does not hold historic or organisational documentation – or at least the latter is not accessible.[102] Neither Rwanda nor the DRC could provide significant official sources as, in the former, much of the archives were deliberately destroyed by the retreating governmental forces in 1994 and, in the latter, the two great lootings of 1991 and 1993 liquidated many of the few documents that had been collected, in a more or less systematic way, after 1960.

In the three countries themselves, research therefore had to rely primarily on interviews with competent persons, many of them directly involved. For instance military or former military personnel or police officers, civilian authorities in security ministries, parliamentarians, Western and international

102 Officially there is one officer in charge of historic documentation, located in the MoD in Yaoundé, but nobody at the ministry could actually point out his whereabouts or contact details

military and conflict advisors, and, to the extent possible, members of local communities. Other interviews were carried out with local academics in the three countries. Semi-structured interview techniques were used. All interviews were both a tool for oral information gathering and for the collection of unpublished written sources, some of them belonging to the grey literature not authenticated by the post-1994 regime, others being private papers, and still others official documents that had ended up in private hands. A lack of reliable written documentation could thus fortunately be compensated for by the fact that many actors and eye witnesses from as far back as the late colonial period are still alive. In the case of Cameroon especially it was fortunate for my research that founding members of the national armed forces were still in commanding positions, or had just retired. In the case of Rwanda and the Congo the interviewees were identified and met both in Europe and in the country itself.

The difficulty in carrying out such research includes the fact that relevant interviewees are not always easy to identify. Beyond the practical difficulty of detecting who the actors are, and of contacting them, lies the question of their representativeness, as some may have an interest in underplaying or, on the contrary, overplaying their role in particular circumstances. In practice, the so-called 'snowball technique' was used, in other words, the identification of as diverse a range of key persons as possible representing different categories of interviewees or presumably different perspectives as points of entry, who could then recommend other interviewees and help establish contact.[103] The method is clearly qualitative, its success hinging on a patient approach very much

103 On the 'snowball technique' see Cohen, Nissim and Tamar Arieli (2011), *Field Research in Conflict Environments: Methodological Challenges and Snowball Sampling*, Journal of Peace Research, 48, 4, 423-435; Fujii, Lee Ann (2010), *Shades of Truth and Lies: Interpreting Testimonies of War and Violence*, Journal of Peace Research, 47, 2, 231-241; on methodological constraints see Faugier, Jean and Mary Sargeant (1997), *Sampling Hard to Reach Populations*, US National Library of Medicine, 26, 790-797, especially pp.793-795

attuned to confidence-building. This was made possible by the fact that the author was able to enjoy an extensive stay in Central Africa. As other researchers working in sensitive environments have demonstrated, a highly personalised approach is sometimes the only way to gain access to crucial actors who would have remained out of reach via official channels.[104] This approach is very helpful in mitigating the high levels of secrecy and political suspicion that may cause distrust of the researcher in such environments. As this author experienced repeatedly, the researcher often then becomes, as described by Daniel Bar-Tal, a welcome psychological 'valve' for the expression of long subdued grievances or too long held secrets.[105]

One risk often identified with the snowball approach is that the researcher may become the prisoner of the perspective of a particular 'clique', introducing a bias in his/her findings. This risk is particularly high in such conflict-ridden societies as those of Central Africa. It was mitigated in the present case by dedicated efforts to cover as broad a spectrum of perspectives as possible, including, for example, for Rwanda, both governmental representatives in Kigali and Europe-based oppositional groups or, for the DRC, both the European-based diaspora and Defence Ministry officials in Kinshasa. In the case of Rwanda, moreover, informing both sides of contacts with the other (in general terms) was essential in building trust. Without such openness contact would have immediately broken down, even if this made the initial moments of each interview more difficult. In terms of substance, in the case of Rwanda, the difficulty was almost the opposite of that usually feared from critics of the snowball technique: whether among local or international actors, views remain

104 In one case, it was possible to interview the highest commanding general of the national Army only working through informal channels, as the official meeting request had remained stalled in the ministry's bureaucracy

105 See for similar examples See Bar-Tal, Daniel (2000), *From Intractable Conflict through Conflict Resolution to Reconciliation*, Political Psychology, 21, 2, 351-365

with little exception so polarised that there is no agreement on a historical narrative of the first two republics. Judgments remain filtered by interpretations of how a particular action or inaction may or may not have contributed to the 1994 events, making it extremely difficult for the researcher to identify 'the truth in the middle'.

Whilst the 'snowball' technique proved an effective tool for access to a sufficient number of representative actors, in the atmosphere of fear still prevailing in Cameroon, the DRC and, to some extent, Rwanda, the quasi-totality of the interviewees preferred that their encounter with the researcher left no visible trace. The fear of being connected with the 'wrong' ideas is strong in the three countries. This applies to oral testimony as well as to the sharing of print material including documents that were published earlier and distributed by the government but now belong to the realm of grey literature and can only be obtained if the source is protected from discovery. Thus, the vast majority of interviewees asked to remain anonymous and the invitation to sign an ethics research form met with complete misunderstanding. Following its obvious deterring impact on contacts' willingness to proceed with interviews, a verbal procedure was used instead to communicate the content of the departmental consent form. The difference between research adhering to the formal requirement, and no research at all, was decisive. In this regard it has to be noted that the reluctance to sign whatever document was not only prominent among civil servants and the military, who may fear for their career (or their pension), or even their lives, but also among local academics. In some cases, interviewees specifically requested that their confidences be kept off-the-record. Their will has been respected and such information has not been used to document facts in the present dissertation; however it has proven

useful to cast light on the atmosphere of a particular period and key actors' motivations, interests, and trepidations.

The method described above should provide sufficient protection against the risk of bias in interpreting events. Three types of imbalances, however, could not be fully protected against. The first relates to the at times large discrepancies in the documentation available for each period of state and military development in each of the three countries separately. There is therefore the risk of overestimating the importance of a period simply because more information was available on that period. The second is one of comparability of sources across countries, as actors are organised differently and do not produce information in a standardised way. Those risks have been mitigated as much as possible by the use of a strong theoretical framework (see 'Key concepts' above) and an effort to relate each case study to the core themes of the framework. Finally, openness towards attitudes that do not fit one's own expectation of modernity is vital for research that depends on the collaboration of people who show a strong tendency to secrecy, as they fear being judged as non-modern. That such complications can be overcome was eloquently proven by the writings of authors like Ryszard Kapuscinski.[106] The 'non-simultaneity' epistemological approach described above has been a key tool in addressing the cross-cultural pitfalls of such research, which is in itself an encounter between partially overlapping and asymmetric political cultures.[107]

106 See for example Kapuscinski, Ryszard (2002), Ebène, Pocket, Paris

107 See for a discussion Werner, Michael and Bénédicte Zimmermann (2006), *Beyond Comparison: Histoire Croisée and the Challenge of Reflexivity*, History and Theory, 45, 1, 30-50

3 Dissertation Outline

Building on the concepts outlined in the present chapter, chapter two will plant the context for the later analysis of the African military and its relationship to the state. Part of this context lies in the benchmarks set by the experience of longer existing states on other continents. For analytical purposes, and at the risk of simplifying reality somewhat, three scenarios of state formation and state-building can be identified: the long process of state creation in the more ancient polities on other continents, the late 19th early 20th century experiences of authoritarian state-building, and post-World War II democratic state-building. Those three scenarios will be scrutinised for clues about two main aspects: firstly, the relationship between stages of state formation and the evolution of political cultures; secondly, the role and place of the military in connection to both elements. Particularly important questions are whether, and in which conditions, it is possible to 'accelerate' the process of state-building or state transformation on the basis of a political culture which is obviously not in tune with the institutional model to which it aspired. In this, Japan, Germany and Turkey yield profound lessons for Africa. Another core aim is to identify the conditions in which the military, as part of a culturally-marked social and political body, is able to distance itself from the latter to act primarily according to its institutional role in a state-strengthening fashion. These are the conditions that enable us to differentiate those cases where the military is an instrument for state-building from those where it is an obstacle thereto.

On the basis of these historically-driven parameters, the creation and development process of African states and their armies is sketched out to highlight a number of crucial differences from existing European and Asian models. I argue that a local political culture characterised by patronage systems and closed or limited access orders, and reinforced by a strong impact

of mysticism, is a central explanatory factor for those differences. Taking into account the historical context of state creation in Africa, military immersion in traditional political cultures, and particular aspects of states' policies regarding the role of the military in post-colonial national development, Chapter 2 concludes with a set of key questions that serve as a roadmap with which to examine the subsequent case studies with an overarching concern: to identify whether and how, and explain why the military has, or has not, contributed to the consolidation of a Weberian and/or democratic state in a selection of Central African states. In this context it is possible to demonstrate that classic Huntingtonian civil-military theory is unsuitable to Central African conditions.

The three case studies in Chapters 3-5, on Cameroon, the Congo and Rwanda, constitute the core of the empirical research. As they are geared toward answering the same question, they share a common thread and have a largely similar structure, although slight variations have been necessary to take account of different realities, in particular in post-Cold War developments. Each national situation and each period is examined from a dual historical and sociological perspective so as to pin down the articulation between political decisions and cultural constraints and also the positioning/role of the military at key turns in those countries' development. Differences and communalities in the shape of the military and its relationship to the state/political authority are highlighted in order to identify later in the work (Chapter 6) the parameters of those differences.

In terms of its logic, each chapter starts with a description of the traditional military heritages of pre-colonial and colonial times as key determinants of the shape of the respective national military after independence. Post-independence years are then analysed according to a country-specific periodicity, in order to take into account differences in national

trajectories, however, with the overarching concern of pinpointing the role/attitude/task of the military at key junctures of state-strengthening/state-weakening initiatives. Whilst the three countries show a similar pattern of instrumentalisation of military by the political power holders in the 30 years following independence, it is possible to observe sharp differentiation as of 1990: whereas Cameroon continued more or less on the same course, the collapse of the Mobutu regime in the mid-1990s revealed the weakness of the state-building process in the Congo, and its relapse into a form of state and military that is more akin to the 'natural/Tillian' than to the Weberian model; Rwanda, for its part, after the cataclysmic events of the genocide, began an entirely new state-building phase, in which the military took a leading role.

Chapter 6 exploits the results of the empirical case studies in order to check and refine the initial assumptions. A clarification arises from this analysis as regards the degree and characteristics of 'quasi-ness' of each state and, correspondingly, the level of 'quasi-ness' of its armed forces. Similarities and differences across cases are identified and related to interlinked historical and cultural factors, as Central African states are at various stages of transition from Tillian to Weberian to democratic states and from closed to open societies.

On this basis, tentative conclusions suggest that the military in the sub-region can, in exceptional circumstances, be a vehicle for the advancement of state-building. As was the case in Turkey and Japan, and as the study of Rwanda demonstrates, these exceptional circumstances reside in the presence of a strongly-motivated political leadership that is determined to make state-building its absolute priority and has succeeded in mobilising the support of the military to that end. In both other cases, as the bearers of traditional political cultures sustaining institutional fragmentation, with higher

ranks being part of a ruling elite that has little interest in political change, the military can only be an obstacle to state-building.

4 Value Added by the Research

The present research has added value for academia as well as for the policy world. Academically, first, it contributes to filling the very wide gap in empirical knowledge on the military in the little accessible and little understood societies of Francophone Central Africa. Second, it explores the little researched field of military sociology in Africa, providing findings on the identity of the military as social actors that may have validity beyond the specific region of Central Africa or at least may be pursued by further investigations in other parts of the continent. Third, it relates those findings to the development of the state in Central Africa, providing analytical tools to understand the underlying reasons for the weakness of states on the continent and how they can be explained in relation to the long process of historical state formation.

Casting such a light on historical development and their sociological underpinnings will be valuable to policy makers. For a number of years, international assistance efforts to Africa have been focussed on 'bringing the state back in'.[108] At the centre of state building policies have been efforts to reorganise and rebuild the security system as a crucial pillar of the state's ability to deliver its core functions.[109] Initially carried out in 'post-conflict' settings, security sector reform (SSR) programmes have, however, borne the stain of their origins as they have been implicitly cast in terms of 'rebuilding' states along the 'Westphalian model where these never really existed'.[110] Gradually, a broader understanding has developed as it has become clear that not only 'post-

108 The phrase was already coined as early as 1985 by Evans, et al. (1985). It has been mainstreamed in donors' policies since the mid-1990s

109 See the OECD-led 'International Dialogue on Peacebuilding & Statebuilding' http://www.pbsbdialogue.org/

110 Chopra, Jarat (2007), *Building State Failure in East Timor*, in Hehir, Aidan and Robinson, Neil, State-Building: Theory and Practice Routledge, New York, p142

conflict' states, but also a range of 'fragile' states are in need of SSR programmes.[111] Those programmes, however, continue to be carried out at a mainly technical level, despite a general recognition at the declaratory level that they require political engagement to be effective.[112] The political sensitivity of the subject is part of the explanation, but insufficient consideration of how the sociological underpinnings of security services and institutions hamper state-building is another one. As a result, SSR practitioners have stumbled against resistance by many local actors, including the military, whose interest has been to keep things as they were, as the rationale motivating their actions has been entirely different from the Huntingtonian principles underpinning Western-driven programmes.[113] Prisoners of their linear conception of social modernisation processes, SSR practitioners have failed to understand the 'non-simultaneity' in which many African actors, and in particular the military, are evolving. Applying late 20th century technocratic solutions[114] to actors partly living under conditions of Early Modern warfare, however, is bound to fail as they are appropriate within the 'political age' of only one of the actors involved.[115]

By looking at the sociological and cultural elements that affect the institutional development of the Weberian state, and in particular one of its pillars, the security sector, with this research I hope to lift part of the veil on the reasons for this resistance. Once they understand better the discrepancy between the externally assumed role of armed formations within state and society and their actual function within specific politico-cultural settings, policy

111 And at declaratory level at least, willing to accept them. Such is the case of the 35-40 states considered as 'fragile' by the OECD

112 See for instance OECD DAC (2007), Handbook on Security Sector Reform, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development - Development Assistance Committee, Paris

113 For a discussion see Donais, Timothy (2008), Understanding Local Ownership in Security Sector Reform, LIT, Münster/London; Chabal and Daloz (1999)

114 Or a 'capability-enhancing' activity, as the phrase was originally-coined by Alfred Chandler in the mid-1970s. See Chandler, Alfred DuPont Jr (1977), The Visible Hand, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA

115 For a similar argument see Egnell and Halden (2009), p.40

practitioners may conceive SSR programmes with greater context-specific sensitiveness.[116]

116 Chanaa, Jane (2002), Security Sector Reform: Issues, Challenges and Prospects, Oxford University Press for the International Institute for Strategic Studies, Oxford

Chapter Two: Benchmarking the State and the Military – Historical and Cultural Determinants

1 Historical Patterns of State-military Relations

Historical analogies in state formation and state-building as differentiated in Chapter One will enable us both to identify why and in what circumstances 'self-strengthening' measures were taken on other continents with a longer state tradition and with what results and then to pin down what kinds of decisions and actions have constituted 'self-weakening' policies, leading to the decline or even the disappearance of the state. In all cases, war and the military are central to the argument.

With the historical analogies of state/military formation at hand we will then apply the parameters identified to sub-Saharan African state creation, the conditions of which are framed by three key differences from Asian and European models: firstly, parts of Central Africa remained stateless societies; secondly, state formation where it happened was curtailed by colonialism; and, finally, state-building in the region took strikingly varied forms with different results, directly depending on the nature of civil-military relations as they evolved in the context of a particular political culture before and since independence.

Although state-building is mostly discussed today as a reactive operation within a post-conflict context, it is important to realise that it has a history. An exploration of Japan's post-Tokugawa and Turkey's post-Ottoman state modernisation undertakings – two successful experiences of state-building in history – will yield fruitful lessons for the analysis of contemporary state-building attempts in Central Africa. A brief overview of more recent (post-World War II and post-Cold War) experiments in democratic state-building will provide further

insights for the study of African cases, if one assumes that such aims were actually being pursued in good faith.

1.1 State Formation and the Military

In practice it took a long time before the state reached the level of abstraction that made it a 'legal person'.[1] The first of three main steps in this process was the reorganisation of the community away from the concept of the *genos*, the right of blood, to the *demos*, the right of the people, in the course of eradicating tribal power structures in favour of promoting a more inclusive concept of the polity.[2] The medieval ages were marked by a large number of different territorial polities, cities, and parochial, monastic and ecclesiastic communities competing for available power sources. These were weak states in which standards of governance were yet to be developed, and military organisation was based on personal affiliation.[3] Actually, European composite monarchies 'came to be called states only during the first half of the seventeenth century'.[4] In a further step of abstraction of statehood, a distinction emerged between the ruler and the state or, more precisely, between the state treasury and the monarch's private purse. This, however, did not happen all of a sudden and not everywhere simultaneously.[5] It is the systematic state-building endeavours resulting from the French-driven revolutionary wars, the 1860-70

1 Van Creveld, Martin (1999), The Rise and Decline of the State, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge

2 Van Creveld (1999), p.56; This reform of the political organisation of community came with general military service directly related to political rights in a relatively strong state, see Mossé, Claude (1999), Les Institutions Grecques à l'Epoque Classique, Armand Colin, Paris

3 Delbrück, Hans (2000), Geschichte der Kriegskunst im Rahmen der politischen Geschichte, Walter de Gruyter, Berlin/New York, p.11

4 Van Creveld (1999), p.106; Rubinstein, Nicolai (1971), *Notes on the Word Stato in Florence Before Machiavelli*, in Ferguson, Wallace K, Florilegium Historiale University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 313–326 pp.313-326; on the term 'composite monarchies' see the seminal article by Elliott, John H (1992), *A Europe of Composite Monarchies*, Past & Present, 48-71

5 William III of England in 1698 is considered 'the first monarch in history who could not be held personally liable for his government's debts'. A formal separation of the English king and the state as distinct institutions was achieved only in 1770 and it became the undisputed consensus only towards the end of the 19th century, for the quote see Van Creveld (1999), p.154

European wars of unification, and the US civil war that signalled the final demise of princely rule and the rise of the institutionalised state.[6] In terms of political culture, the nation became the basis of the state in the early 19th century, setting the stage for mass participation in war as well as in politics.[7] The omnipresent Western state that we now take for granted finally 'emerged in the nineteenth-century absorption of the population into the state'.[8] This absorption functioned via a balancing of compulsory general military service against the growing political participatory rights of the people.

Hence, state formation and military formation were intertwined processes that proceeded in step. Only with policies strengthening the state relative to its external competitors was the state-military apparatus gradually established. Every twist in the development of the state led to the adjustment of its military.[9]

Firstly, there is the model of non-directed state formation that was deliberately transformed by some rulers into an efficient state-building policy via the application of a determined state-strengthening policy.[10] Victoria Tin-Bor Hui generalised the conceptual differentiation between state-strengthening policies and state-weakening measures as happened in East Asia. The second template, and Tin-Bor builds her argument on it, refers back to Charles Tilly's critical interpretation of Early Modern European state formation as a process of the gradual sophistication of organised crime. Among them, our Central African case studies, Cameroon, Congo and Rwanda, display all of those elements of

6 Bayly, Christopher A (2006), Die Geburt der modernen Welt, Campus, Frankfurt, p.175; see as an example Friedrich II von Preussen (1987), Das politische Testament von 1752, Reclam, Stuttgart

7 Anderson, Perry (1974), Lineages of the absolutist state, New Left, London, p.198

8 'Population' here is not identical with 'nation' because non-nation states are not unknown among Western states of the 19th and 20th centuries, Tilly (1992), p.65; see also Migdal, Joel S (2004), *State Building and the Non-Nation State*, Journal of International Affairs, 58, 1, np, online edition

9 In some cases, the impulse came from the military side of the equation – what happened especially after big leaps in military technology – and it was the state that adapted.

10 For example, mercantilism became the prevailing state policy in the Early Modern period when warfare necessitated a reliable income of rulers. This economic strengthening of the country allowed for the strengthening of a central administration.

state/military-formation to different degrees, whereby the whole spectrum from stateless society (pre-colonial Cameroon, pre-colonial and modern Congo) to the strong state (Rwanda) is covered.

According to Tilly and Tin-Bor, the state's crucial elements are the monopolisation of the means of coercion, regular taxation, and the creation of a professional, apolitical administration. The driver of state formation was the power holder's need, or desire, for warfare. To be successful in war, princes had to increase their military strength by building powerful armed forces and to enhance their administrative and legal grip on economic capabilities to finance these forces. Financing war – or just the maintenance of fleets and fortresses – elicited the requirement to secure reliable extractive capacities for resources within the princes' reach. To be met efficiently, this requirement called in turn for the creation of a professional administration.[11] Administratively, the state's efficiency increases through the self-perpetuation and expansion of its bureaucratic tools involving a 'regular process for recruiting and training bureaucrats', both military and civilian, who preferably ought to be protected against political interference.[12] Such professionalism is best realised by systems of meritocracy, which simultaneously and beneficially prevent the creation of 'hereditary' power structures competing with those of the ruler.[13]

Ensuring the legitimacy of these efforts was decisive for their outcome because the requisite support from society could not simply be commanded – it had in most cases to be bargained for.[14] As warfare became increasingly expensive, access to increasingly large pools of capital and tighter

11 Bayly (2006), p.339; Tin-Bor Hui (2005), pp.30f; Wendt, Reinhard (1984), Die Bayerische Konkursprüfung der Montgelas-Zeit, PhD History, Universität München, München

12 Gurses, Mehmet and David T Mason (2010), *Weak States, Regime Types, and Civil War*, Civil Wars, 12, 1, 140-155, p.141

13 Van Creveld (1999), p.42

14 Few princes could afford war without political consent: Charles II's 1670s Dutch wars were financed by Louis XIV, exposing him to the latter's blackmailing, Rodger, N. A.M. (2004), The Command of the Ocean: a Naval History of Britain, 1649-1815, W.W. Norton, London, pp.80f

administrative control became necessary. In exchange, the political costs for the princes had to be paid in the political participation of the contributing society. The formation and development of the military was part of this process, which could be described as a 'state/military-formation' process.

Unlike ancient China, where direct rule over time facilitated the creation of a strong state, Early Modern Europe followed a path of state formation that tried to maintain indirect-rule configurations as long as possible. In both cases the sovereign territorial polities developed (increasingly centralised) administrative authority, a monopoly of coercive means, and general taxation.[15] The disparity between the two paths of state creation lay in the higher European levels of domestic intermediary power structures, which could seriously compete against the state. Hence, the European path to state formation was constrained by the main power broker's acceptance of a larger number of different stakeholders.

As a result, with the more radical domestic reform strategies of bureaucratisation,[16] steady territorial military expansion and conscription,[17] the typical Far Eastern state-strengthening policy caused a demise of the archaic aristocracy/knighthood, and the military became an army, a well-defined body of regular forces, exclusively loyal to the state. European state-strengthening policies or, rather, policy attempts to create an all-dominating Empire, failed.[18] Accordingly, the military remained for a long time at an organisational level fit for indirect rule settings. No European state made a serious attempt to institute direct rule from top to bottom until the era of the French Revolution. Before then all but the smallest states relied on some version of indirect rule, thus running serious risks of disloyalty, dissimulation, corruption, and rebellion. Indirect rule

15 Tin-Bor Hui (2005), p.6

16 fùguó 富国 'to enrich the state',

17 qiángbīng 强兵 'to strengthen the military'; on 'conscription' see Tin-Bor Hui (2005), p.35

18 Barudio, Günter (1985), Der Teutsche Krieg, 1618-1648, S. Fischer, Frankfurt; Parker, Geoffrey (1984), The Thirty Years' War, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London ; Boston

made it possible to govern without erecting, financing, and feeding a bulky administrative apparatus, but it enabled intermediates' predation, which in turn 'incited resistance and recalcitrance by the population, increasing political costs to the ruler'.[19] Certain degrees of betrayal, corruption and rebellion were seen as preferable to a policy of erecting, financing and feeding a bulky administrative apparatus.[20] With a growing need for financial predictability for expanding warfare, however, these circumstances encouraged some rulers to establish 'durable domestic military administrations [which then] bypassed intermediates, and led the way from indirect to direct rule' – the main condition of a strong institutionalised state.[21]

However, it should take somewhat longer to produce armies, which could non-ambiguously be considered part of a viable state. European princes 'increased military strength by using mercenary units and enhanced economic capabilities by contracting loans and selling public offices'.[22] For centuries indirect rule provided the means for the sustaining of weak princely states. Only with the Napoleonic wars did a swift succession of self-strengthening policy reforms address the question of survival against the onslaught of the *levée en masse* in one state after another. Napoleonic France itself represents the closest a European state ever came to forming a dominant, directly-ruled, empire as a result of self-strengthening policies.[23] It is in direct reaction to the military threat represented by the modern French state and its revolutionary

19 Tilly (1992), p.21
20 Tilly (1992), pp.21, 25, 104
21 Tilly (1992), pp.105f
22 Tin-Bor Hui (2005), p.36
23 However, France's inherited national debt and her reliance on her allies hampered this trajectory decisively. Self-weakening policies of Napoleon's predecessors had eroded his advance from day one.

armies that other states begun enforcing decisive self-strengthening policies all over the continent.[24]

Although accelerated state-strengthening policies in view of a dangerous international situation were sometimes intended to be temporary only, since the 19th century they have almost always proven irreversible. Returning to post-Napoleonic Europe, when the rulers of the *Anciens Régimes* resumed office after 1815 in France, Italy, the Rhine Valley, Poland, and Egypt, the state remained forever modified as a result of the state-strengthening policies implemented over the few years of French rule. The Bill of Rights, like the *code civil*, once given to the emerging bourgeoisie, was impossible to recapture from them once their political weight had increased with their economic and political bargaining power. The bargaining of duties against rights had long been a part of European political culture, with parliaments having a history going back to the Spanish *Cortes de Léon*.[25] Now it increasingly became the dominant feature of political culture.

Similarly, when, for example, the Confederate States broke away from the US central polity, this was possible because the government in Washington was by design a weak state. Abraham Lincoln was dependent on the individual Northern states to support him and his Union forces, and as a result the Northern United States developed an efficient, (half-) nationwide, bureaucracy to wage the civil war. After 1865, most of the states kept the bulk of these bureaucratic mechanisms in place, by free decision for some, by rule of

24 See Delbrück (1985), book 4, chapter 4, and Ertman, Thomas (1997), Birth of the Leviathan: Building States and Regimes in Medieval and Earls Modern Europe, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p.125

25 Merriman, Roger B (1970), *The Cortes of the Spanish Kingdoms in the Later Middle Ages*, The American Historical Review, 16, 3, 476-495

occupation for others.[26] In the same period, the unification wars of Italy and Germany had fairly similar results.

With warfare becoming increasingly costly – with big fleets and dockyards, standing armies and Vauban fortifications, mass armies, and aerial warfare – it could not be sustained through plunder and racketeering. The state/military structure increasingly had to seek the support of society for funding and manpower. As a result the tax payers' bargaining power *vis-à-vis* the state/military structure was strengthened and the administration itself became increasingly civilianised and democratised. Hence, Western state formation was a process of state-society bargaining.

A tendency to ever more subsume parts of society under the strong state's rule was accompanied by the military's desire increasingly to subordinate the state, and at some point in the Janus-faced state/military structure the army apparently gained a dominant position.[27] In the course of this development, the primordial relationship between society and the state/military structure as representing two conflicting realms had receded, gradually being substituted by the new state-military dialectic. Below the surface of the militarised state the civilian bureaucracy expanded fast, owing much of its growth to material gain (in terms of access to taxable territory and population) achieved by the military. The split of coercive power, between domestic judicial and police forces and mainly externally oriented military forces, further shifted the centre of power-gravity back to the civilian realm. Over time the civilian state and its accompanying element, the regular standing army, imposed itself on the

26 The 'implicit social contract' of military service in exchange for political rights was already present in the contemporaries' conscience: for black volunteers to the Union's forces the 'ultimate goal had been equal rights with whites', Dolman, Everett Carl (2004), The Warrior State: How Military Organization Structures Politics, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, p.10

27 The Prussian Soldatenkönig Frederic William I, for instance, ruled a state that was for good reason described by contemporaries as 'a military owning a state rather than a state having an army' – this although he also invented the vocational civil service, the loyal Berufsbeamtentum, see von Berenhorst, Georg Heinrich (1797), Betrachtungen über die Kriegskunst, Fleischer Leipzig

Western world. Such was the way in which the struggle for control between the armed element of the state and the non-military element moved back and forth, resulting in the pendulum swinging away from militarist dominance towards civilian supremacy during the 19th century.

In Europe, with the gradual establishment of direct rule, bargaining with merchants, entrepreneurs and sub-state power holders progressively gave way to forms of direct bargaining between the ruler and the people, mediated by the bureaucracy and intermediate institutions (e.g., Parliaments, *départements*, town councils). The state had to bargain in order to obtain the means of war – financial resources, raised via taxes, and the conscription of soldiers – conceding in return that it had to share a part of its power with others (Parliaments, governors, mayors), to be accountable for its acts (Parliaments, justice systems), and to provide an increasing range of services to the people (e.g., infrastructure, schools, healthcare). As Charles Tilly has pointed out:

> The core of what we call "citizenship", indeed, consists of multiple bargains hammered out by rulers and ruled in the course of their struggles over the means of state action, especially the making of war.[28]

Once modern mass armed warfare had made it necessary for the state to be politically inclusive of those who should fight these wars, democratic mass participation could no longer be held at bay. Over time each group in society that contributed to the war effort was eventually allotted suffrage, and mass citizenship was created via mass participation in war. The emergence of total war in the early 20th century opened the way for universal suffrage and the recognition that every national had to be endowed with all the rights and duties

28 Tilly (1992), p.102

of citizenship.[29] In step with this development, the military culture changed character from a coercive apparatus, made of political subjects, into a body of self-confident citizen-soldiers endowed with democratic rights and duties. This process was in step with a similar change of the civilian bureaucracy, evolving from an extractive apparatus to a provider of services to its citizens. Gradually the contentious relationship within the dual state-military construct levelled out, and it became a symbiotic win-win equilibrium. The democratic state was born and its army established, even if the political civil-military divide was not consistently honoured.[30]

In the recent past, the personal union of the citizen and the soldier lost importance with the wane of mass armed forces. Military service could again become a mere profession; however, it remained essentially bound to the citizenship of the armed forces' state.[31] The coherent military body of citizens, loyal to a state, committed to rules of engagement in accordance with international law, is the most advanced form of the army. Military conscription had been the core tool to achieve this to a degree that all-volunteer forces of nationals can now be established.[32]

1.2 State-building and the Military

Although Joel Migdal insists that state-building along a set master plan would be impossible, some historical examples support the notion that state-

29 Women achieved these rights at various times between the end of World War I and World War II

30 Generals Franco, Giorgios Padadopoulos, and Ibrahim Firtina being some examples

31 See Burk, James (1992), *The Decline of Mass Armed Forces and Compulsory Military Service*, Defense Analysis, 8, 1, 45-59

32 Buzan (2010), pp. 16,18 and North, et al. (2007), p.261, North et al describe this transition as one from so called limited access orders to open-access orders. This incremental process of a social constituency first achieving a status of a 'doorstep order' to then proceed to a proper liberal order. The stepping stones of progress were the Tillian state, followed by the Weberian state, developing steadily through nationalism and popular sovereignty into fully fledged democratic orders. Whilst in Europe a positive-law legal system based on the principle of mutual consent developed the African continent stalled under alien domination

building can be learned and implemented.[33] Nineteenth century Meiji Japan and post Great War Turkey provide examples of successfully designed and performed state-building, in the former case transforming an Early Modern indirect-rule order into a directly-ruled strong state and in the latter executed mainly through the dual strengthening of state and military.

It is not surprising that Japanese and Turkish state-building policies (begun in 1868 and 1919, respectively) are regularly cited as constructive examples for African state-building. In both cases the antecedent political orders had developed in incremental ways similar to their European equivalents, and then deliberate state-building provided the fast-forward mode towards a strong state.[34] It was frustration with political weakness and military crises that paved the way for state-strengthening policies, with Japan realising its incapacity to defend its capital against a siege from a squadron of American warships, and Turkey having to endure a Greek and French invasion.[35] Both countries' state-building policies led to the creation of modern bureaucratic states, which were purposely designed after western European examples.[36] In both cases state-strengthening measures had to be enforced against internal and external resistance.[37] State-building had been decided on, planned, and successfully executed.

33 Migdal, Joel S, et al. (1997), State Power and Social Forces: Domination and Transformation in the Third World, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p.9

34 In Japan the underlying ideology was expressed by the slogan slogan fukoku-kyôhei, 'rich land and strong army'

35 Withney Hall, John (1968), Das japanische Kaiserreich, Fischer Verlag, Frankfurt, especially pp.246ff, and Wendt, Reinhardt and Jürgen Osterhammel (2006), *Vom Umgang mit dem Imperialismus: Konzepte, Kontroversen und Lösungswege auf den Philippinen, in China und in Japan*, in Dabringhaus, Sabine, Europa und die Welt im langen 19. Jahrhundert Open University Hagen, Hagen

36 See Beasley, William Gerald (2000), The Rise of Modern Japan: Political, Economic and Social Change since 1850, St. Martin's Press, New York; Yildirim, Metlim (2010), Türkischer Nationalismus Gestern und Heute, Grin Verlag, Norderstedt, p.79

37 See Schwentker, Wolfgang (1992), Anfänge der japanischen Modernisierung: Vom Tokugawa-Shogunat zur Meiji-Ära, Open University Hagen, Hagen, p.50, Paine, S C M (2003), The Sino-Japanese War of 1895-1895, Cambridge University Press, New York, p.150

There is no doubt that the military was part and parcel, and even the driving element, of this state conversion. From the outset, civilian and military reformers sought to adjust the military according to their design of the state, and it was modified and used as a means to press through intended change. Military, political, and religious institutions that were considered outdated were rigorously limited or abolished; and with conscription every soldier obtained the dignity of citizenship.[38] The soldiers that followed their leaders to modernity became the ground stock of an 'unprecedented broadening of the circle of political participants' in the establishment of a new order.[39] Other elements of successful state-strengthening policies included separation of the military from the political spheres and also setting in motion a politico-cultural revolutionary process by a complete secularisation of the constitution.[40] By these means direct rule was vigorously established and the nation was introduced to the bargain for political power.

Four conditions seem to have combined for these two historical examples of state-building to succeed:

- Firstly, reformers could build on the formerly existing structures and personnel of organised central states;
- Secondly, the reforms were initiated entirely under conditions of effective 'local ownership', implemented by a determined leadership willing to succeed at the necessary political costs;
- Thirdly, this leadership did not hesitate to sweep aside traditional political cultures – isolationist-Confucian-Shintoist in Japan, conservative-Islam in

38 In Japan obtaining a family name and thus an individual identity was traditionally restricted to carriers of arms, and became possible to people other than Samurai with military service

39 Atabaki, Touraj and Erik J Zürcher (2004), Men of Order: Authoritarian Modernization under Atatürk and Reza Shah, Tauris, London, p.189

40 Lewis, Bernard (1961), The Emergence of Modern Turkey, Oxford University Press, London, p.276; Schwentker (1992)

Turkey – and to impose new political values that were foreign to large parts of their societies; and

- Fourth, state-building included the creation of a modern army, either by designed reform or through the inclusive dynamic of a national war of liberation.

1.3 Democratic State-building and the Military

Democratic state-building has occurred at an accelerated pace during two periods in recent history, one immediately after World War II, and one that begun immediately after the end of the Cold War and is still on-going.[41] The best-known experiences are the most spectacular examples after World War II, those of Germany and Japan, which were actually characterised as democratic state-building only in hindsight. In reality, the aim of the project was primarily the de-nazification of Germany and the de-militarisation of Japan. The negative forces of fascism and militarism had to be eradicated from the two countries' societies during the retrogression to pre-war constitutionalism. What had to take place was state re-building rather than state-building since, in both cases, the basic underpinnings of a state apparatus and a (relatively) pluralist political order had been in place prior to the conflict. In Germany, the democratic tradition was mature: parliamentary elections had brought the first oppositional (social-democratic) relative majority to the *Reichstag* in 1908, and it remained the biggest single faction until 1933, at times alone forming the government. In Japan, the political parties that had entered Parliament in 1889 were only merged into a single fascist organisation – following the particularly liberal

41 This periodization dovetails with the second and third Huntingtonian waves of democratisation, although this scholar sets the third wave as beginning with the mid-1970s Latin American developments, see Huntington, Samuel P (1993), The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman

Taisho-democratic period – as late as 1940.[42] In both countries, the constitutional standards and democratic foundations were there; they only had to be resurrected. Precisely what part indigenous leaders and what part the Allied victors of World War II played in steering Germany and Japan toward the democratic path remains a matter for debate. It is clear, however, that external pressure, prodding and assistance had a degree of influence.

As regards the military in this process, for good reason both the victors and the vanquished in the war were hesitant to rearm the newly emerging polities too soon. Interestingly, although it took ten years at least for post-war West Germany to recover its sovereignty (5 May 1955), the founding of the *Bundeswehr* then occurred only six months later. The post-war Japanese Police Reserve, founded to replace US occupation troops during the Korean War, was transformed into the Japanese Self Defence Force in 1954. The Japanese forces have since been the nationally accepted ambassador of Japanese defensive pacifism.[43]

Apart from Germany and Japan, democratic state-building occurred in very few countries post-World War II, at a time when the policy agenda was framed in terms of 'nation building' and liberation from colonialism. Democratic state-building only occurred in India, where a long history of Hindi, Mogul, and mixed British colonial/indigenous rule had facilitated institutionalisation. Here too a determined elite was willing to cast aside traditional political and social values, by the abandonment of the caste system in 1950.[44] The newly imposed values of modernity were equated with democracy. According to this view state-

42 See Peukert, Detlev (1993), The Weimar Republic: the Crisis of Classical Modernity, Hill & Wang, New York; Tipton, Elise K (1997), Society and the State in Interwar Japan, Routledge, London

43 Britt, Thomas W, et al. (2006), The Psychology of Serving in Peace and Combat, Military Culture, Praeger Security International, Westport CT. Only 60 years later has the SDF principal been called into question, but by an internationalist desire to participate under arms in UN peace keeping forces

44 The three years delay of this policy after independence is not due to a lack of urgency, but to India's difficult circumstances during the first Indo-Pakistan war.

building is not yet completed with the establishment of formal statehood and a regular army; this is rather the moment where it begins in earnest.[45]

Successful democratic state-building after the Cold War has only been witnessed so far in the part of Eastern Europe that was closer culturally to Western Europe and that wished to enter the 'democratic clubs' represented by NATO and the European Union. The experience of Eastern Europe is similar in one way to that of post-World War II Germany and Japan, in the sense that the institutions of the state were already there for the most part; they just had to be democratised. It is similar in another way to Japan, Turkey or India where change was driven from a very strong domestic (in that case, popular) will, rather than happening under the wings of a watchful 'patron'.[46]

1.4 Conclusion

A review of various historical examples brings forward useful keys to interpret the current situation in Africa as regards state formation, state-building and the democratic state. Those keys can best be spelled out by distinguishing methodologically between processes and outcomes.

As a process, state formation is a long development, in which the external dynamics of conquest and border creation are inherently linked with the internal dynamics of state self-strengthening. State-building can only succeed if a number of conditions are met, which are best exemplified by the case of *Meiji* Japan and Kemalist Turkey: pre-existing institutional underpinnings, such as elements of a trained bureaucracy; and a strong domestic leadership

45 Egnell, Robert (2009), Complex Peace Operations and Civil-military Relations: Winning the Peace, Routledge, Milton Park, p.46

46 The decisive impact of a domestic consensus, an idea of the common good, and broad-based legitimacy of the bureaucratic and governmental order, as opposed to - inevitably deficient - foreign assistance, had already been highlighted by Samuel Huntington as indispensable to successful state-building in general, see Huntington, Samuel P (1968), Political Order in Changing Societies, Yale University Press, New Haven, and more specifically for Africa by Mamdani, Mahmood (2002), When Victims Become Killers, Princeton University Press, Princeton, and Bastian, Sunil and Robin Luckham (2003), Can Democracy Be Designed?, Zed Books, London, p.51

determined to impose a new regime at the cost of traditional cultural and political values. As a rule, local ownership of the process is essential.

As an outcome, state formation leads to state-building. At minimum, it leads to the legitimate monopoly of force on a given territory, the establishment of a professional, apolitical bureaucracy and other institutions organising and managing the direct relationship between the ruler and the ruled. It includes a constant relationship of give-and-take between the ruler and the ruled, at best with a variety of control mechanisms in place to check the decisions of the ruler.

Building states means to establish systems of direct rule, in other words, parting away from existing indirect rule patterns based on clientele and patronage arrangements and replacing them with meritocratic bureaucracies. To build democratic states on the basis of Weberian states means accepting the constant bargaining with citizens, represented by elections; parliamentary oversight; and the rule of law as an expression of an open society.

2 Africa's Curtailed State Formation Experience

A polity abstracted from the *demos* rather than the *genos* and evolving from an instrument of a ruling person or caste to a state as a legal person did not develop in sub-Saharan Africa before pre-colonial state formation was aborted at the end of the 19th century.[47] One can easily detect a discrepancy between reality on the ground and repeated claims of contemporary African politicians' willingness to establish a modern state, built on rational and accountable legality. Where state formation did advance, however, the role of the military was decisive in the outcome.

47 See Illy, Hans F (1982), *Nation und Nationalismus in Afrika. Die Verlockungen eines Vorbildes und die Folgen seiner eindimensionalen Imitation*, Geschichte und Gesellschaft. Sonderheft, 177-207

2.1 The Pre-colonial World

Undetected by the Europeans of the 16th and 17th centuries, large-scale warfare among various African polities, or states, was rampant. The list of African states and empires that rose and died between the 9th and 19th centuries is impressive.[48] All of them had a distinct military history, fighting civil wars, wars of succession, and intra-state wars.[49] Some were military conquest states, some mercantile polities, and others jihadist theocracies.[50] Yoruba states such as Benin and Nupe and Haussa states such as Kanem with their long history saw their power decline in the 18th century, when the trans-Saharan slave trade, one of the principal sources of these states' income, shifted away from the caravan routes to the coastal depots of European contours – very much to the advantage of emerging states such as Asante and Dahomey.[51] Europeans in the 19th century encountered states with a core under the tight control of a monarchy.[52] Standing armies were well known in the Great Lakes region, in Rwanda, Bunyoro and Toro, whilst other relatively strong states never developed standing armies.[53] Joseph Smaldone argues that just before the

48 Gana, Kanem, Songhay, Fulbe, Jolof, Timbuktu (a city state without hinterland), the Sokoto Caliphate, and Segu Bambara (Middle Niger Valley), Yoruba, Dahomey, Asante Buganda, and Rwanda

49 Bertaux, Pierre (1999), Afrika von der Vorgeschichte bis zu den Staaten der Gegenwart, S.Fischer Verlag, Frankfurt, pp.46-50; Many of these geographically scattered communities resemble Elliott's model of European early modern 'composite monarchies', see Elliott (1992)

50 Young, Crawford (1994), The African Colonial State in Comparative Perspective, Yale University Press, New Haven, p.15; his list of forms of social organisation includes such states and many stateless societies in pre-colonial Africa

51 Bertaux estimates that over time up to two million slaves were sent North via these caravan routes, and according to other research another estimated one million European slaves were sent south the same way between 1500 and 1830, see Davis, Robert C (2003), Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters: White Slavery in the Mediterranean, the Barbary Coast and Italy, 1500-1800, Ohio State University, Columbus; see also the research by Wolfgang Krause (Sorbonne), and of Martin Rheinheimer, who found evidence for Arab slave hunts in 1627 as far North as Island

52 See Kandt, Richard (1901), Bericht des Forschungsreisenden Dr Richard Kandt aus Ruanda, Mitteilungen aus den deutschen Schutzgebieten, and Turner, Thomas (2007), The Congo Wars: Conflict, Myth, and Reality, Zed Books, London; New York, p.59

53 See Reid, Richard (1999), *War and Militarism in Pre-Colonial Buganda*, Azania, 34, 45-60 and Reid, Richard (2012), Warfare in African History, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp.66f; for a more comprehensive overview of Bugandan warfare see Reid, Richard (2002), Political Power in Pre-Colonial Buanda, James Currey, Oxford

Western conquest, the Sokoto state, for example, was even going through an embryonic revolution of a Weberian type founded on centralised control over firearms via the creation of standing armies developed around a monarchist system.[54] In general, the African military played a role in state formation similar to their European counterparts. Usually their supreme commander 'was held to be second only to the king'.[55]

The Central African equatorial rainforest, however, does appear in the annals of interstate relations.[56] Surrounding it were the states of the Great Lakes region: Ankole, Rwanda, Burundi and Buganda to the North and East; the Zambian Bembe, Lunda and Luba to the South; and Kongo and Loango to the West (South and North of modern Cabinda).[57] These states were either quickly defeated when their supply of arms stopped with the abolition of the slave trade, or they disintegrated into decades of civil war, as did Kongo and Luba, after having basically sold much of their population into slavery.[58]

54 Smaldone, Joseph P (2008), Warfare in the Sokoto Caliphate: Historical and Sociological Perspectives, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge

55 Thornton (1999), 88f

56 See Vansina, Jan (1990), Paths in the Rainforests: Toward a History of Political Tradition in Equatorial Africa, University of Wisconsin Press, Madison; for a rare exception, see Ropivia, Marc Louis (2007), Batailles Navales Precoloniales en Afrique: Geopolitique du Buganda et du Manyema au XIXe Siècle, Economia, Paris; Reid (1999); there is much literature on Anglophone southern Central Africa (Zambia, Malawi)

57 Well known African Empires such as the (Angolan) Kongo Ngola, Rwanda, Buganda, Bunyoro, Ankole, Bemba, or the Luda and Lunda empires (loosely organised federations of chiefdoms), or short lived states like the Yeke of King Msiri and the trader-empire of Tippu Tip did not, except in the most shallow way, rule the heart of Central Africa. The example of the Kongo Ngola region of Central Africa indicates that the process of state formation, strongly interwoven with the slave trade, was also accelerated, and eventually ruined, by the trade as well, see Peers, Chris (2005), Warrior Peoples of East Africa 1840-1900, Osprey Publishers, Oxford ; on Tippu Tip see Ndaywel e Nziem, Ididore (1998), Histoire générale du Congo: De l'héritage ancien à la République Démocratique, Editions Duculot, Paris ; on Kongo see Hilton, Anne (1985), The Kingdom of Kongo, Clarendon Press, Oxford, p.33 and Manning (1998), p.65; on Lunda see Reid (2012), p.85

58 Hilton (1985), pp.5 and 33; Mann, Kenny; (1996), Kongo Ndongo, Dillon Press, Parsippany, NJ , p.5

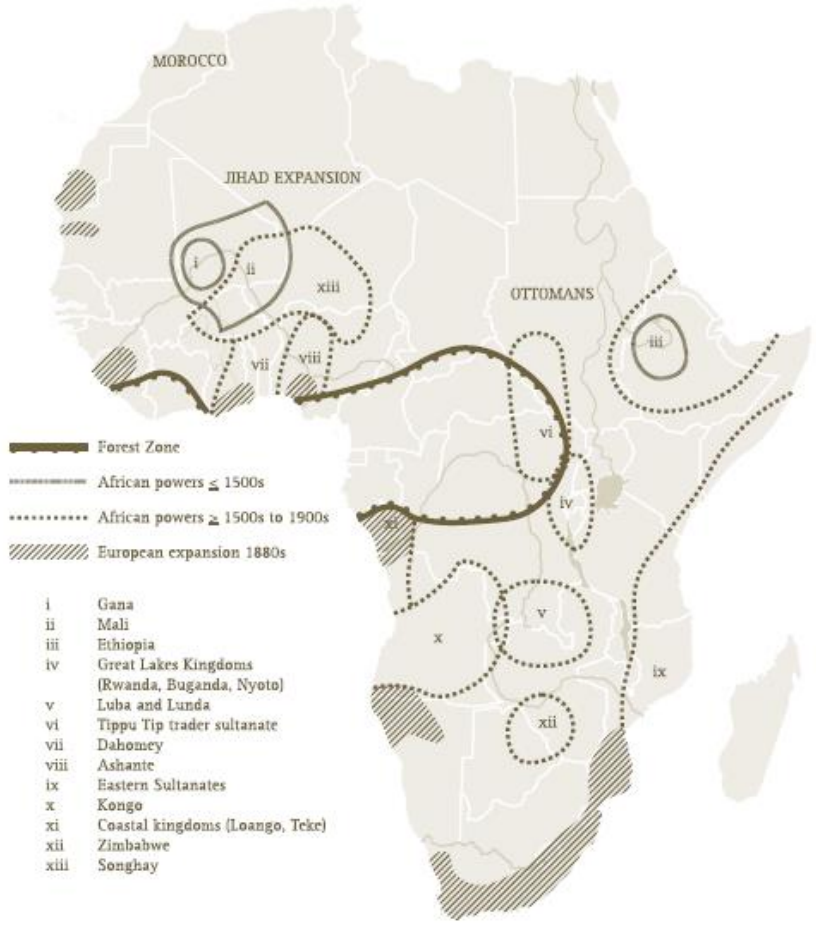

Table 1: Pre-colonial state formation in Africa

The large scale Atlantic slave trade had for centuries provided the income from which much of their military and other hardware was purchased.[59] With an African agrarian population not bound to their soil and able to evade easily any power imposed on them, people had to be taken under control in the most proximate way: 'Indeed, ownership of slaves in Africa was virtually equivalent to owning land in western Europe or China'.[60] Hence, African campaigns for

59 See Law, Robin (1978), *Slaves, Trade, and Taxes: The Material Basis of Political Power in Precolonial West Africa*, Research in Economic Anthropology: An Annual Compilation, 1, 37-52; Adamu, Mahdi (1979), *The Delivery of Slaves from the Central Sudan to the Bight of Benin in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, in Gemery, Henry A and Hogendorn, Jan S The Uncommon Market: Essays in the Economic History of the Atlantic Slave Trade Academic Press, New York, 163-180; for a more recent account see Okafor, Obiora Chinedu (2000), Re-defining Legitimate Statehood: International Law and State Fragmentation in Africa, The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, p.27

60 For the quote, Thornton (1999), p.16; see also Reid (2002), p.114; on 'gunpowder revolution' see McNeill, William H (1982), The Pursuit of Power: Technology, Armed Force, and Society Since AD 1000, University of Chicago Press, Chicago; Parker, Geoffrey (1996), The

slaves were the strategic equivalent to European warfare for territory. Even without direct European involvement, an African 'gunpowder revolution' triggered not only 'inflation' in numbers and intensity of slave raids, but also of fortification.[61] Yoruba, and Benin, built ring walls of five to twelve kilometres in perimeter, and Buganda launched a veritable navy campaigning on Lake Victoria.[62] The militarily strongest states were successful predatory economic entities along the lines of a Tillian state. The ability to obtain luxury goods and firearms became central to the economic order, and violent conflict over the sources of wealth became ubiquitous, ending in spiralling warfare.[63] The fate of stateless warrior nations east of the great lakes was alike: Masai, Kimbu, Ngoni or Hehe waged tactically sophisticated, yet limited-in-scale cattle raid wars among each other. They too were rather quickly brought under colonial control by British or German forces that never exceeded two or three companies, mostly composed of recruited Africans trained by European non-commissioned officers.[64] In spite of stronger military resistance against the European expansion, West African embryonic states were eventually defeated before the start of the First World War.

2.2 The Colonial State's Civilian and Military Governance

The emerging colonial state's dependence on intermediaries and native allies, usually described as colonial indirect rule, created new privileged groups within African societies or allowed established local power holders to sustain

Military Revolution: Military Innovation and the Rise of the West, 1500-1800, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge

61 Thornton (1999), p.50; Wrighley, Christopher (1996), Kingship and State: The Buganda Dynasty, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge; Bayart, Jean François (1999), *L'Afrique dans le monde: une histoire d'extraversion*, Critique internationale, 5, 1, 97-120

62 See Ropivia (2007); Reid (1999)

63 Vansina, Jan (1965), Les anciens royaumes de la savanne: les Etats des savanes méridionales de l'Afrique centrale des origines à l'occupation coloniale, Institut de recherches économiques et sociales, Léolopldville, pp.146ff

64 Short-lived states, like the Yeke of the Arab King Msiri (who had taken over the Lunda savannah kingdom) and the trader-empire of Tippu Tip, did not, except in the shallowest way, rule the heart of Central Africa, Peers (2005); on Tippu Tip see Ndaywel e Nziem (1998), p.289

their status and wealth. Collaborators were able to 'use their position in the colonial system to their own advantage', even if the latter was at times inconsistent with colonial ambitions. The colonial project was escorted by the intermediaries, who made this indirect rule system workable. Violence was a constitutive element of the colonial state that enabled both the intermediary and the colonial allies to maintain themselves in power.[65]

Colonial recruitment patterns used by the British in India were subsequently repeated in Africa: members of 'martial races', in other words, warrior tribesmen from remote places, preferably illiterate, were the main source of personnel. Units were thus grouped around tribal affiliation, if possible in hostile relationship to the colonised population among which they were deployed. For example, both Britain and France, the states with the most enlisted African soldiers, carefully chose Christians to control Muslims and Animists.[66] All of these units remained in a way officer-less, because higher ranks, even NCOs, were as a matter of standard assigned to metropolitan forces.[67] Large numbers of African colonial forces were enlisted to fight the independence movements in Malaya and Indochina. In francophone countries many World War II veterans had actually been recruited into the French army proper and were thus French soldiers fighting French wars. Hence, the recruitment for the Indo-China War and for the Algerian War led to an unusually high number of returning veterans, just at the moment of independence.[68] These soldiers had fought independence movements and considered themselves part of the French *Grande Nation*.

65 Trotha, Trutz von (1999), *Über den Erfolg und die Brüchigkeit der Utopie staatlicher Herrschaft*, in Reinhard, Wolfgang, Verstaatlichung der Welt? München, 223-251, p.226

66 Gutteridge, William (1969), The Military in African Politics, Methuen, London, p.9

67 Ibid. p.19

68 Ibid. p.41

The idea of *La Grande Nation*, underlying the French philosophy of nationality, and the Constitution of the Fourth Republic, made francophone Africa a part of the French community. Hence, a distinction between French *Soudan* (modern Mali and Niger) and Guinea or between Gabon and Ivory Coast only made sense geographically, and colonial units found themselves as putative soldiers of the state where they were garrisoned at the moment of independence.[69] Under such circumstances it was even more difficult to transfer the soldier's allegiance from the colonial power to the new state, and to establish a truly national identity for former colonial soldiers.[70] Despite the facts that most of the colonial troops had most of the time a coercive role within the colonial state, and African soldier's contributions 'in the achievement of independence was nil or minimal', the orderly process of decolonisation facilitated their integration as new armed forces.[71] The military in Africa remained detached from the change of European armies. Under the conditions of the colonial-state it remained what it ever was: an apparatus of armed subjects or mercenaries.[72]

Consequently, in the same way as colonialists benefited from autocratic African rule to establish their colonial systems of government, African leadership at independence could easily step into the shoes of the authoritarian colonial leadership, as it matched indigenous patterns of social and political authority and of patronage as a way of perpetuating obedience and subordination. In a way, colonialism provided a structure which enabled African

69 African soldiers, trained and deployed all over the huge African (and at times Asian) empire. It was normal that soldier as well as NCOs from Upper Volta would serve side by side with others from Senegal in the Madagascar campaigns. Conversation with Gabonese retired officer, December 2010, Libreville

70 In Libreville, Gabon, a handful of African veterans still live in the Maison d'Anciens Combattants, and gratefully receive a small pension from France: Visit, Libreville, 2011

71 Gutteridge (1969), p.20f

72 Post WWII regular European conscripts from Belgium did their service in Africa. They remained with their units, without contact with native African soldiers, interview Be 8 former Belgian conscript in Congo, Liège, 2012

elites to continue their amorphous control over society and sometimes to transform some sectors, especially the security forces, to more powerful tools of command. In spite of some positive aspects of a more benign late-colonial European administration, autocratic systems of government have persisted right through pre-colonial societies, colonialism and on into early independence, and they remain the preferred form of rule of most of the African elites today.[73] It is thus possible to argue that, from the point of view of the African people, independence only meant a change of overlords, not a change of ruling patterns. The exploitation of Africa, during the colonial period a joint venture of European and African elites, was now under the sole command of Africans, making little difference to ordinary people. Indeed, an accumulation of the legacy of autocratic colonial tradition and bad leadership after independence has left Africa, according to Paul Williams's reckoning, with eight of the world's ten most failing states, and with eight of the world's most repressive regimes.[74]

The former British and French colonial territories in black Africa inherited a pool of under 90,000 men (including white cadres) at the time of their respective independence between 1957 and 1964. This number actually declined in the francophone territories due to budget pressure and the ensuing demobilisations from the French Army. This heritage – the forces of newly independent Africa – was meagre in absolute size by any standard, lacking in indigenous skills and the specialities necessary for the effective functioning of armed forces, and in many cases lacking those supporting armaments and services which make it possible to operate and deploy armed power against military opposition.[75]

73 Grier, Robin (1999), *Colonial Legacies and Economic Growth*, Public Choice, 98, 3, 317-335. p.319

74 Williams, Paul D (2007), *Thinking About Security in Africa*, International Affairs, 83, 6, 1021-1038, p.1022

75 Crocker (1974), p.278

Roger Murray generalised that, very much in contrast to Latin America and South East Asia, in Africa owing to the generally pacific character of the transfer of sovereignty, rather small and undistinguished armed forces had been inherited from the colonial regimes. The military estate, excepting Algeria, lacked an active tradition in the national independence movement.[76] In contrast with other regions and with few exceptions – such as Zimbabwe – in Central Africa the military has not been the 'primus motor of state-building and consolidation […] as it was in Europe'.[77]

Unfortunately, much of the effort towards this aim was handicapped by both the lack of material traces of pre-existing statehood to build on and immaterial traces of statehood in the conscience of the populations, including on the perception and function of the armed forces. As an outcome, the domestic legitimacy of the state suffered even while its external sovereignty was being enhanced. As regards the armed forces, expatriate officers, anachronistic equipment, inglorious responsibilities, and a paucity of authentic tradition – such was the general legacy left by the colonial formation of African armies.[78]

One can summarise that the colonial construct was a state-like structure without sovereignty. The sovereignty was only defended by its carriers, the foreign powers. The populations were thus not a part of this defence; hence they had no means to bargain for political rights. In the post-independence decades, clientelist systems, both domestic and in relationship to external powers, stabilised the situation to the benefit of local elites as well as 'external patrons'.[79] In the post-colonial/Cold War international era, African governments

76 Murray, Roger (1966), *Militarism in Africa*, New Left Review, 1, 38, 35-59, p.36
77 Herbst (2000), p.109-112, quoted by Egnell and Halden (2009), p.37
78 Murray (1966), p.37
79 Clapham, Christopher S (1996), Africa and the International System: the Politics of State Survival, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p.60

used foreign assistance provided by competing donors 'to finance the growth of the state apparatus and to secure political stability'.[80]

In Central Africa, historical state formation ended, if it had ever started, with the advent of the imposed colonial state. Hence, the bargain for a social contract was omitted, because the 'state' did not have to rely on the populations' consent, but rested entirely on violence and on indirect rule via cooperation with local elites. The only bargains were political covenants between the foreign powers and the local leadership, and the subservience of the people bought through the informal mechanisms of patronage systems.

2.3 State Institutions in African Political Culture

To understand the politico-cultural environment in Central African countries one needs to look at their specific politico-cultural heritage, and their political and military history. The political culture of a country includes its formal and its informal political systems, as well as its economic power structure. It has to be asked: how far is the state involved in the transfer of wealth, and what factors other than legal rational ones play a role in governance.

When Carl Rosberg and Robert Jackson discussed the phenomenon of the persisting weak African polities, they cited external factors responsible for their survival as entities[81] lacking empirical existence yet being recognised by the international community as states.[82] Their internal weakness is aggravated by the enduring pre-independence political culture of informal clientele power systems, whilst their public shell is maintained from outside. The resulting

80 Van de Walle, Nicolas (2006), *International Responses to State Dysfunctionality*, in Clapham, Christopher, Big African States Wits University Press, Johannesburg, p.206

81 Jackson, Robert H and Carl G Rosberg (1982b), *Why Africa's weak states persist: the empirical and the juridical in statehood*, World Politics, 35, 1, 1-24, p.23

82 Kirk-Greene, Anthony H M (1995), *Le Roi est mort! Vive le roi! The Comparative Legacy of Chiefs after the Transfer of Power in British and French West Africa*, in Kirk-Greene, Anthony H M and Bach, Daniel, State and Society in Francophone Africa since Independence Macmillan, Basingstoke, p.27

African elites' relentless 'pursuit of immediate gains' to fund patronage networks is consequently another, whether intentional or non-intended, state-weakening behaviour.[83] The strong tendency of neo-patrimonial systems to favour consumption over investment in institutional capacities results in the 'ruin of the state itself'.[84] The support from external actors to the elites, often motivated by a quest for a diffuse stability, legitimises the very forces that erode the state, or even prevent it from coming into existence. The strongest advantage of central patrons *vis-à-vis* their highest clients, is their access to external resources, be this on the local level through access to national players or, as François Bayart characterised those African leaders, through a system of "extraversion" based on the international patrons as warrants of system survival.[85] By this means the central African political-cultural feature of clientelism is extended into international society. Many observers call these 'patrimonial states,' meaning that patron-client ties rather than legal-rational relationships form the basis of the polity.[86] The patron *is* the state.

The Central African political culture is shaped by a handful of very important features: personalised rule and extreme hierarchism, a lack of civic culture, and a closed society condition. In a context of individuals' boundless exposure to legally non-restricted political and economic power, a constant fight for status, or even survival, and an atmosphere of mistrust and suspicion frame inter-subjective relations at all levels of society. No matter what public position a 'strong man' holds, be this as minister of sports, or defence, or *ministre délégué au tourisme*, there is no sphere he could not reign over, as long as his peers, or superiors, do not mind. Accordingly, without an effective rule of law, everyone

83 Chabal and Daloz (1999), p.113

84 Englebert, Pierre (2000), *Pre-colonial institutions, post-colonial states, and economic development in tropical Africa*, Political Research Quarterly, 53, 1, 7-36, p.14

85 See Bayart (1999)

86 Holsti, Khalevi J (1996), The State, War, and the State of War, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p.105

has to live a precarious life of *débrouille,* in which only privileges count. The idea of a separation between official budgets and personal property is alien to Central Africans, to whom any aspiration for taking up a public position and not to exploit it economically is pointless. The resulting 'personalisation of the state' ensures that political support is built around personalities and individual favours, rather than policies. It also implies that the state represented by an office holder takes on the role of a patron rather than of an employer, in the course distorting the important 'accountability link' between the leaders and bureaucrats and the public. A systematically maintained non-distinction between state assets and personal property of the ruler is at the heart of this system. An all-embracing extreme hierarchism in a closed-society setting, monarchist tendencies in political organisation hand in hand with a hyper-consumptions attitude, and a surprisingly strong influence of irrationality in decision making infuse any aspect of life. All this together forms a certain political culture.

2.3.1 Patronage and Its Political Implications

According to Carl H Landé, clientelism in developing countries is one organising system of society, which may or may not be affected by the official political order, organised groups, class identification, or ideological affinity. At the core of clientelism is a multiplicity of personal relationships; and, even if identifiable groups appear within such patronage systems, they 'operate less as disciplined collectivities than as clusters of personal relationships'.[87] The direct personal character makes the patronage relationship dyadic, reciprocal yet hierarchic and unequal, unlike a theoretical relationship system based on an alliance between peers and on parties to a contract. The latter, contractual

87 This includes 'political parties' that are entirely based on personal attachment to the leader; for the quote Landé, Carl H (1977), *The Dyadic Basis of Clientelism*, in Schmidt, Steffen W, et al., Friends, Followers, and Factions University of California Press, Berkeley, 100-123, p.13; for a similar argument see Wirtz (1999), p.266, who gives the example of the Nigerian 'Chop chop party', a name that literally means 'If I can eat you can eat party''

relationships, involving 'the enlistee in a modern army, the Weberian bureaucrat, and the factory worker', are non-dyadic.[88] They would be the result of negotiated social confrontation, sometimes of violent or political struggle, which did over time soften the hierarchical relationships through the application of checks and balances to political and economic power. But this mitigated social contractual relationship did not develop in Central Africa. Rather the pursuit of particular private aims binds the individual client to the patron who. in Landé's words, 'reserves for himself the right to set his own goals' and chose the patron, or client, who best fits his strategy.[89] The clientele 'contract' is implicit as opposed to formal and explicit contracts.[90] Given the personal relationship, the inequality between master and client becomes more manifest as the relative dependency of the client grows, especially in African neo-patrimonial systems, where the more or less institutionalised coercive apparatus of the state is interconnected via personal union with the patron's networks. For the military of each of the three countries subject to this study we have to investigate the degree to which dyadic relationships matter for its function and role.[91]

2.3.2 The Competitive Character of Clientele Systems

Interestingly, the hierarchical cement of Africa's political culture is paralleled and, to some extent, challenged by a highly competitive characteristic. This competitiveness, analysed by scholars such as Andreas Mehler, Nicolas van de Walle and Michael Bratton, occurs especially in all

88 Landé (1977), p.14

89 Ibid. p.15

90 See Foster, George M (1961), *Dyadic Relationship: A Model for the Social Structure of a Mexican Peasant Village*, American Anthropologist, 63, 6, 1173-1192

91 Lemarchand, René (2008), The Dynamics of Violence in Central Africa, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, p.268, has pointed out, that clientelism and ethnicity comfortably go hand in glove

societies that are 'based on zero-sum, non-accommodative beliefs'.[92] It has significant impact on the possibility to establish the 'social contract' necessary among all social groups including the elites to build a stable state.

> Patron-client relations are based on very strong elements of inequality and differences in power [and] the crucial element of this inequality is the monopolization by the patrons of certain positions that are of vital importance for the clients; especially [...] of the access to the means of production, major markets and centres of the society.[93]

The difference from open-access orders is obvious, with little leverage in the hands of the client. It would, however, be a mistake to understand this as a one-sided exploitative relationship, as it remains reciprocal in essence. Whoever has experienced being chosen and declared 'patron' by hopeful contemporaries knows how demanding this relationship can be for the patron as well. As much as patrons are seeking clients to improve their social or political standing, potential or actual clients immediately change their allegiance if the opportunity arises.[94] In other words, in multiple social interactions one cannot speak of a "specific exchange". Rather such interaction forms what Emile Durkheim originally described as pre-contractual elements in society[95] and Talcott Parsons eventually conceptualised as 'generalised exchange'.[96]

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92 Mehler (2008), p.15; see also Bratton, Michael and Nicolas Van de Walle (1994), *Neopatrimonial Regimes and Political Transitions in Africa*, World Politics, 46, 4, 453-489, p.465

93 Eisenstadt and Roniger (1980), p.50

94 One has to be aware that if one does a favour to someone, recipients may react in two ways: those unsatisfied with their actual patron will understand such a gesture as an attempt to recruit a new client, and those without a patron will jump on the occasion and claim the benefactor as 'patron'. If not repulsed, the new client communicates the alleged 'contract' within the community. The message is: 'I am protected'

95 See Durkheim, Emile (1933), Durkheim, Emile (1933), On the Division of Labor in Society, New York, MacMillan, MacMillan, New York

96 See Parsons, Talcott (1963), *On the Concept of Influence*, Public Opinion Quarterly, 27, 37-62

Western style individualism is hardly comprehensible to people living in multiple and exclusively hierarchical relationships that rarely allow an egalitarian relationship. People encountering each other will, without exception, try to grasp their hierarchical relationship before they engage each other in earnest. There is little social mobility other than that which is at the clemency of a patron, or/and at the expense of a competing client. To both patron and client, this generalised exchange functions as insurance: to the patron against the risks encountered in constant power struggle on his relative level of patronship and to the client against the uncertainties of living without legal and economic fall-back positions. The exchange is not an egalitarian one but materialises in gift giving and tribute payments. Both are seemingly voluntary contributions that are highly standardised. The patron has as many clients as possible, and the client is a manifold entity, trying in more sophisticated clientelist societies – as we will see below in the example of Cameroon – to improve his position by originating and developing new 'elevators' of advancement. These elevator networks do not work against the established hierarchies, but they may open the way to recruit a clientele of one's own.[97] The threats to patrons exist mainly from persons in comparable positions competing for the same relatively higher patron's patronage, but occasionally a successful client manages to

> accumulate resources [political or other] which are not commensurate with their relatively low ascriptive standing, and [...] may threaten the patrons' monopoly of access to markets and to the centre or centres of the society.[98]

97 This threat became more relevant in those post-conflict regions of Africa, where foreign NGOs appear as new players on the market place of patronialism. Often with access to more, and more attractive, resources than local leaders, NGOs not only become potential patrons but are actually often included in the clientele system. If this is not possible, local leaders resort to setting up their own NGOs, in order to compete for foreign or national funding. The result is a huge number of mock NGOs, Trotha (1999), p.241

98 Eisenstadt and Roniger (1980), p.60

The ‘generalised exchange’ in Central Africa is not between equals. Its lop-sidedness was best described by William Reno, in an influential volume by Berdal and Malone, and is worth a lengthy quotation:

> To make patronage work as a means of political control, the ruler must prevent all individuals from gaining unregulated access to markets. A shadow state ruler thus logically seeks to make life *less secure* and *more materially impoverished* for subjects. That is, a shadow state ruler will minimize his provision of public goods to a population. Removing public goods, like security or economic stability, that are otherwise enjoyed by all, irrespective of their economic or political station, is done to encourage individuals to seek the ruler's personal favour to secure exemption from these conditions.[99]

2.3.3 Access to Political Positions and Personal Enrichment

“Privatised institutions” without the separation of the private and official spheres, produce a political administration that represents a personal affair of the ruler, much like in England before the rule of Charles II. Political power under such conditions is considered ‘part of his personal property which can be exploited by means of contributions and fees’.[100] Marc Frontries has linked such political power, based on a political culture of hierarchism and consumerism, to the military culture of armed forces, which lack capacity and show indifference to the plight of ordinary people.[101]

The culturally based political habitus of the rich and powerful, including the upper echelons of the military, are built both on an extremely hierarchical society and on the non-separation between state funds and private wealth. In a

99 Reno (2000), p.47

100 Weber, Max (1978 (1922)), Economy and Society, University of California Press, Berkeley, pp.1028f

101 Fontrier, Marc (2005), Des armées africaines: comment et pour quoi faire ?, Edition Outre-terre, Paris, p.71f

culture where political power is described by the verb 'to eat', sharing access to power is identical with losing it. Once power is weakened, the opportunities to raise funds are diminished, and political power based on a clientele network is eroded.

In behavioural terms the strong connection between social hyper-hierarchism and 'consumerism' impacts strongly on the shaping of the political order. The 'politics of the belly', an expression coined by Bayart, is the outcome of the indivisibility of power and wealth.[102] In Central Africa the main channel of the distribution of wealth is the state, which in turn is the only public expression of the opaque underlying power systems, based on a clientele structure of society.

The constant uncertainties of a system based on privileges rather than rights, the lack of security of one's property, both private and commercial, and the constant pressure to either redistribute one's gain or hunt for precarious sources of revenue have had their impact on the Central African political and general culture. A tendency towards quick gains and high turnover in redistribution has developed, which Ali Mazrui has described as 'possessive individualism'.[103] This is true for 'big men', but also for their clientele, and it applies to all layers of the clientele system, thus rendering it a general expression of the political and economic culture. As a result, even in good faith, African elites rarely manage to perform even the 'developmental patrimonialism' which they claim to carry out to the benefit of their countries.[104]

The key consequences of the patrimonial configuration include an orientation toward the gain and preservation of personal interests, rather than

102 Bayart, Jean François (1989), L'Etat en Afrique: la politique du ventre, Fayard, Paris; see also Pottier, Johan (2002), Re-imagining Rwanda: Conflict, Survival and Disinformation in the Late Twentieth Century, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p.266, who gives the example of the Nigerian 'Chop chop party', which literally means 'If I can eat you can eat party'

103 Mazrui (1967a), p.210

104 Develpmental patrimonialism is a concept introduced by Davis Booth and Martin Dawson to describe benign patrimonial leadership. We will return to this concept below

the common good; a political legitimacy based on the ability to control the distribution of wealth; and a resulting incompatibility with direct rule. With coercion being an imperfect means for efficient rule, and with fair participation in discussions being very difficult, corruption becomes a means of social political and economic existence.[105] Corruption becomes a steady element of justifiable behaviour.[106]

2.3.4 Some Political Consequences

First: an absence of public accountability

Neo-patrimonial systems are incompatible with any form of decentralisation of power. To the contrary, in 'Big Men' networks everything must follow the logic of personal relationships and must be communicated via the hierarchic chain that binds patrons and clients. The clientele shadow system, which results from this drive to keep total political control in the patron's hands, works in two directions. First, and as intended, it undermines any development of flexible, interest-driven, or even cross-ethnic cooperation, let alone diversity in competing socio-political options, and it paradoxically provokes the creation of competing client systems by those who intend to gain influence.[107] Among them are 'secret societies, businessmen, chiefs, the military, [and] warlords […] tied together by key persons' in order to prevent another independent carrier of political power to develop. This competitive setting also provides the groundwork for zero-sum thinking that does not permit the sharing of oversight powers.[108] The channels and vehicles of power are not bounded permanently nor grounded in territory or other kinds of fixed

105 See Doig, Alan and Martin Tisne (2009), *A Candidate for Relegation? Corruption, Governance Approaches and the (Re) Construction of Post-war States*, Public Administration and Development, 29, 5, 374-386

106 Herbst (2000), p.132

107 Lemarchand (2008), p.199f

108 Egnell and Halden (2009) p.45

membership,[109] as the 'fluctuating, changing, and fluid' character of informal networks counters any hopes for accountability of its members.[110] As a result, the foundation of an effective state system becomes politically too costly for incumbent elites because to 'give up their private wealth and privileges for the sake of a distributive logic based on merit and performance would be tantamount to political suicide'.[111] This is particularly true for the DRC, where during the wars of the 1990s and 2000s, the 'interests of local elites were better served through their association with informal and stateless governance structures' than with the Kinshasa administration.[112]

Second: Patrimonialist hierarchism in a closed society

The highest position is never under threat because of lagging competence or performance, as is the case in democratic systems, but only when it becomes unable to gain and provide resources.

If one measures African political culture along indicators of openness and political flexibility one would definitely find that it belongs to 'closed societies' – with all of the associated political implications. Within African political culture, this does not mean that political systems necessarily become totalitarian, as Karl Popper has assessed in the case of Europe; instead, as Sir Ralf Dahrendorf emphasises, within African contexts, local and national elites are rather contented if only no one criticises them or cultivates political opposition.[113] Hence, the subjects of neo-patrimonial systems are expected to live in apathy, rather than being actively subdued. African political culture is thus

109Ibid.

110 Jörgel, Magnus and Mats Utas (2007), The Mano River Basin Area: Formal and Informal Security Providers in Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone, Swedish Defence Research Agency, Stockholm, p.12

111 Lemarchand (2008), p.273

112 Vlassenroot and Raeymaekers (2005), p.17

113 See Schmidt (2001)

more of an authoritarian rather than totalitarian character, depending in each case on the political willpower of the commanding elements of the society.

This setting boosts a constant social and political intra-elite power contest, in which incumbents, as much as opposition leaders, can only accept 'winner-take-all' outcomes. Ultimately, there is no prospect for negotiated agreements.[114] The middle layer of relatively well-off clients does not fare much better than their superior patrons, and the position of inferior clients is under constant threat. Depending on a single patron's intercession and promotion at higher ranks in the clientelist system produces a similar level of stress, even if the financial situation is less precarious.

Aspects of African political culture, often off-putting for Western reformist aspirations, include firm hierarchical thinking and customs, which have a paralysing impact on everyday life and, more importantly, on long term political perspectives. From childhood on, hierarchical thinking imprints individuals to function in a politically non-permissive environment and reproduces itself through a general non-critical obedience to the status quo. The International Network for Higher Education in Africa presents the following image of a typical Central African university, which seems to this author fairly representative of a more general phenomenon:

> The university model that is the legacy of the colonial tradition is a centralized and unified institution where powers are concentrated in the hands of authorities. It is an institution that cherishes centralization excessively and abhors delegating powers. It is conceived in the image of an absolute monarchy, jealous of his prerogatives, particularly with regard to conferring degrees and sharing knowledge.[115]

114 Bratton and Van de Walle (1994), p.465

115 INHEA, International Network for Higher Education, www.bc.edu/bc_org/avp/soe/cihe/inhea/profiles/Gabon.htm

Political culture leaves its footprint on competing as well as collaborative informal social and political mechanisms. Everything must follow the logic of personal relationships and is communicated via vertical channels between clients and patrons. Below a central master-patronage network of the most powerful, horizontal communication between clientele sub-systems, or peers, within a patronage network fuels only competition rather than cooperation. [116] The resulting muted communication is a very strong feature of such 'non-relations', because everything has to go via the head of whatever organisation or community.

Participation or delegation in any meaningful way represents a threat to everyone who has something to lose and this is the reason why the rentier states in place are organised according to the principle of 'no taxation with no representation'.[117]

Given that Central African political culture does not know any non-hierarchical relationship – a person is never a peer, he is always either inferior or superior to any other member of society – this ubiquitous 'ranking' leaves no space for mobility, be this intellectually, via constructive criticism, or materially, by social mobility, without clashing with other spheres of interest. [118] The resulting lack of contractual patterns (*Vertragskultur*) based on equality in reciprocity (there being only dyadic unequal reciprocity) limits relationships to two options: to cheat if one holds the inferior hierarchical position or to impose if one holds the superior one.

The non-acceptance of any critique, even in a constructive form, and the limitless obedience within the social and political (purely) vertical hierarchy,

116 Eisenstadt and Roniger (1980), p.64

117 Okruhlik (1999), p.296

118 See for an analogue development elsewhere Rouquié, Alain (1988), *Demilitarization and Military Dominated Politics in Latin America*, in O'Donnell, Guillermo, et al., Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Comparative Perspectives Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 108-137, p.133

albeit not absent on other continents,[119] are very prominent in the Central African sub-region. In many conversations with this author, Africans from other regions either claim never to have shared, or alternatively to have overcome these cultural characteristics long ago.

Third: The consolidation of patronage as a mode of post-colonial governance

Whether intentionally or unintentionally, the carriers of the ideologies of independence and political self-determination at the same time maintained colonial-style governance in their newly emerging states. As it appears, liberal thought was never introduced to an extent that could trigger a reform of the Central African political culture in a profound way. Rather, patterns of pre-colonial rule were maintained.[120]

The combination of political immobility, weak civil societies, and few participatory traditions was part of the colonial legacy which 'most of the first generation of rulers found useful to maintain'.[121] The establishment of one-party systems, basically repeating the pre-independence ban on organised opposition, reinforced the established power relationship between the elites and the people, on whichever side of the Cold War contest a country was situated. Indeed, the great bipolar confrontation provided a comfortable environment to secure domestic power. The resulting states were defined by Neil Robinson as non-adaptive structures without infrastructural power, which are based on despotism, a policy and form 'imposed by elites, rather than negotiated, and

119 Blondel, Jean and Takashi Inoguchi (2006), Political Cultures in Asia and Europe, Routledge, Abingdon, p.9

120 Schneider, Leander (2006), *Colonial Legacies and Postcolonial Authoritarianism in Tanzania*, African Studies Review, 49, 93-118, pp.95f

121 Van de Walle, Nicolas (2001), African Economies And the Politics of Permanent Crisis, 1979-1999, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge New York, p.17

enforced through the state's possession of coercive resources, rather than accepted and enacted by society generally'.[122]

In such a context it becomes easier to understand why personal rulers, who are obliged to be to some extent 'inclusive' in sharing wealth, rather chose compensatory channels via the clientelist scheme to attract loyalty, especially the loyalty of carriers of arms. If the stability of rule is based on pure coercion, it erodes over time and has to be replaced by the 'gentler procedures of political patronage'.[123]

In Central Africa dimensions of neopatrimonialism, including clientelism, 'Big Man' presidentialism and nepotism, are so deeply ingrained in political life as to constitute insuperable institutions. Presidentialism is actually a hybrid form of what Ali Mazrui has called the African monarchical tendencies.[124] He thus deduces present political settings from pre-colonial ones, pointing thereby to the strong position of the executive inherited from colonialism.

By contrast, the notion that Africa was ever composed of sovereign states, classically defined as having a monopoly on force in the territory within their boundaries, was rejected by scholars such as Jeffrey Herbst and Mathieu Deflem. If they actually had, so the argument goes, the political structure of African states should be fully differentiated and territorially bound. In the Central African politico-cultural environment, however, the state could never become the all-embracing monopoly-holder of power. Political power systems are highly differentiated and the state is only one way to control wealth. The personal gains of power brokers are closely connected with the extractive instruments of

122 Hehir, Aidan and Neil Robinson (2007), State-Building: Theory and Practice, Routledge, New York, p.4

123 Martin, Michel Louis (1995), *Armies and Politics: The 'Lifecycle' of Military Rule in Sub-Saharan Francophone Africa*, in Kirk-Greene, Anthony and Bach, Daniel, State and Society in Francophone Africa since Independence MacMillan, Basingstoke, 78-96, p.89

124 See Mazrui, Ali A (1967b), *The Monarchical Tendency in African Political Culture*, The British Journal of Sociology, 18, 231-250

the pseudo-bureaucracy, and the interests of armed and non-armed members of the countries' elites are strongly interwoven.

The determined upholding of the institution of chieftaincy as the core of indirect rule ended with decolonisation in much of Central Africa. With the installation of bureaucracies, local traditional rulers were gradually side-lined. However, this policy was only partially successful, because the neo-patrimonial structure, as political 'background noise', stood in the way of establishing a true bureaucracy. Former chiefs' consent was gained by appointing them to prestigious representative sinecure positions. Patronage networks continued working in a modern disguise. As a rule, intermediary power brokers were subsumed under the master patronage of the political leader, usually heading a single party system. In return the president would adopt pseudo-traditional insignia of power unrelated to the constitutional order.[125]

Since there are hardly any intermediary levels of decision-making within the highly hierarchical Central African political structure, rulers often become increasingly isolated. The resulting effort to compensate for this isolation through alternative channels again strengthens informal systems. The military, an established factor within both the formal and informal systems, benefits significantly from its dual positioning in terms of networking. Simultaneously, the military can traditionally claim a good proportion of the state's funds, which already helps to bribe it into obedience.[126] In Central Africa the state is not simply a political instrument: it is the key source of revenues necessary to gratify one's clientele.

125 Most famously Jomo Kenyatta's, and Joseph Mobutu's, leopard headgear, Trotha (1999), p.231

126 On the informal aspect see Lamb, Guy, et al. (2012), Rumours of Peace, Whispers of War, Assessment of the Reintegration of Ex-combatants into Civilian Life in North Kivu, South Kivu and Itury, The World Bank, Washington p.89; on the institutional aspect see Mouiche (2005), chap.7

Apart from materialistic reasoning Central African political culture is also impacted by a strong element of irrational or mystical beliefs, even if they may prompt objectively irrational behaviour based on supernatural ideas. As Michael Schatzberg and other researchers have demonstrated, witch hunts and sorcery play an important role in an environment where people throughout society consider the state as powerful only during daylight. At night, which virtually means in Central Africa during 12 out of 24 hours, the state is an impotent power as opposed to the creatures of the night. Such assumptions are not irrational in the eyes of many Central Africans, including the political elites.[127] On a fairly everyday basis, sorcery and witchcraft play an important role in society and politics (especially during election times) and have accompanied and expanded with modernity rather than having been wiped out.[128]

In sum, the Central African political culture is based on a mixture of fear, opportunism, and constant 'looking over one's shoulder' to avert being catapulted away from comfortable places within the clientelist order.[129]

The formal political system only represents the visible element of the political condition. It is still very important as the means of representation and legitimacy *vis-à-vis* the international community. The informal power structure – partly existing under the façade of weak institutions, partly operating openly in parallel to them – is the scaffolding of the indirect rule order. Indirect rule, in turn, is the state-weakening policy *par excellence*.

127 See Schatzberg (2001) Moore, Henrietta L and Todd Sanders (2001), Magical Interpretations, Material Realities: Modernity, Witchcraft and the Occult in Postcolonial Africa, Routledge, London; Geschiere, Peter (2008), *Witchcraft and the State: Cameroon and South Africa*, Past and Present, 3, 313-335; Ndjio, Basile (2008), *Mokoagne moni: Sorcery and New Forms of Wealth in Cameroon*, Past and Present, 3, 271-289; Parés, Luis Nicolau and Roger Sansi (2011), Sorcery in the Black Atlantic, University of Chicago Press, Chicago

128 Moore and Sanders (2001)

129 Newbury, Colin (2003), Patrons, Clients, and Empire: Chieftaincy and Over-rule in Asia, Africa, and the Pacific, Oxford University Press, New York, p.12

2.4 Consequences for the Military

Robin Luckham demonstrated as early as 1971 how military and security institutions link to their wider politico-cultural environment, showing that a great proportion of individuals within the security apparatus secure informal power in their organisation, irrespective of their formal status.[130] In the perception of the population, too, informal mechanisms outpaced the state in importance. In order to explain this configuration we have to look at the historical process that caused the alienation between the military and the people, leading to the absence of a social contract as it was meant to be copied from older states at the time of independence.

*2.*4.1 Inauspicious Beginnings: The Alienation of Soldiers from the Community at Independence

The separation of community and the military, and their alienation from one another, was ushered in by the colonial quasi-state between the last decade of the 19th and the early 20th centuries.[131] The African military no longer protected the existing social organisation of the society as their indigenous armies but appeared in its new role, shielding the state from alien rule and its autochthon bridgeheads.[132] In addition, during wars of colonial conquest, *Tirailleurs Sénégalais*, or *Askaris*[133] were essentially Africans making up the colonial armies' rank and file, and these wars then mostly pitted Africans

130 Luckham, Robin (1971), The Nigerian Military: A Sociological Analysis of Authority and Revolt (1960–1967), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge; Luckham later successfully generalised this interpretation for sub-Saharan Africa in the introduction to his volume on democratic control of security forces, in Cawthra and Luckham (2003), p.17

131 See Iliffe (1979), pp.104f; Desforges, Allison (1972), Defeat is the Only Bad News, New Haven, Yale University Press

132 As a rule, so called 'martial tribes' from remote marginal regions, who had little affinity to the rest of the country, were preferred as soldiers

133 Arabic word for soldier, adopted to Swahili, and then applied to the native personnel of the German colonial Schutztruppe

against one another.[134] The resulting symbiosis between foreign and local lords ruling the country was deftly described by Jean Pierre Chrétien as 'dual colonialism'.[135] It is this process of alienation of the African carriers of arms from their community that for the first time allows the historian to speak of distinct civil-military relations in Africa.

The new African leaders' reservations about their prospective national forces were not exaggerated; after all, they had seen these soldiers fighting independence movements all over the world, in Malaya, Indonesia, and South East Asia.

The multi-racial *Troupes coloniales* had become a prominent feature of French defence policy, as witnessed by the recruitment of over 40 African battalions for external service during the inter-war years. Crocker observed:

> Multi-racial troop deployment was integral to defence planning worldwide. [...] Recruits were fed into units destined to serve in other African territories, in other parts of the empire or in Europe, and these units derived their identity as much from their place of deployment as their place of recruitment.[136]

The parallel service of Frenchmen and Africans – as well as French units and French-officered black units – blurred the territorial identities of colonial forces beyond recognition.

Some World War II veterans had developed a more self-conscious stance; however, they could not provide a distinct form of nationalism such as their Europeans peers had learned – as many of them had not done their service in their region of origin, even if they had fought in Africa. British King's Rifle

134 Welch (1975), p.239

135 Chrétien (1982); Some colonial sub-contractor states like Buganda, and Rwanda even increased in size and wealth under European protectorate

136 Crocker (1974), p.276

soldiers may have served overseas, but in Africa they would not have to differentiate Kenya from Uganda; few among *Tirailleurs Sénégalais* who found themselves as part of the armies of Mali or Guinea would have originated from the countries where they had been sent by their colonial masters. In a way, their combat experience in successfully formed units had left them as 'national orphans'. Indeed, rather than join in the struggle for independence many African soldiers finally mutinied against their 'own' new states.[137]

2.4.2 The Absence of a Role for the Military in the Social Contract

The African military has not been a driving force of state-building and consolidation as it was in Europe.[138] Leonard and Samanta describe this condition as a consequence of the missing social contract between the African peoples and their rulers. Such a social contract normally rests on two different bargains, one between the military and the civilian elites, and the other between this two-faced ruling elite and the people.[139] The colonialist-coercive character of the armed forces, and foreign support to the regimes, permitted the omission of such a social contract.

For the military this meant that its character as a purely colonial coercive force did not alter from its technical role in the colonial quasi-state to the post-independence state. Instead, it became a control mechanism for the personal rule system, with its own internal clientelist dynamic. In addition, under Cold War conditions, the military swiftly transformed from an instrument of the state into an instrument of regime security as state and regime were fused in the

137 Uganda, Tanzania, and Kenya called in British forces only a few years into independence to subdue their militaries' mutinies, see Parsons, Timothy H (2003), The 1964 Army Mutinies and the Making of Modern East Africa, Greenwood Publishing Group, Westport

138 Herbst (2000), pp.109f; Egnell and Halden (2009), p.37

139 See Leonard, David K (2011), Social Contracts and Security in Sub-Saharan African Conflict States: The Democratic Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone and Somalia, Danish Institute for International Studies, Copenhagen

understanding of both the local elites and their international backers. The military was therefore shaped according to the needs of the ruling elites and their foreign patrons.[140] Accordingly, the personal affiliation of the soldier increasingly shifted to his leader rather than to the state as 'legal person'. Hence, in most of Africa the military is a corporate element of the neopatrimonial society, or as one observer puts it: 'the armed wing of the ruling elites',[141] rather than an instrument to protect the nation.

2.4.3 Compounding Soldiers' Alienation: The Military Dependence on Foreign Support

The end of the Cold War meant the loss of military patrons for many African officers.[142] The same pattern of patronage networks that could be found in any section of the bureaucracy and the parastratal companies, applied to the international military world. The military built up their own international intra-military clientele systems in parallel to the politicians' patron-client relations with external powers.[143] The strong stand of high ranking officers in patron client-relations within the military was described in organisational terms by Alex Weingrod and others, who provided detailed reports on how officers exploited external military aid to provide goods to their clienteles.[144] The top military would decide on who received which privileges, like being sent abroad for training at a foreign military academy, or on a peace-keeping mission, both of which helped

140 The DRC and Cameroon with the West, the Congo Republic and Angola with the East etc

141 Thomson, Alex (2000), An Introduction to African Politics, Routledge, London, p.133; Mehler specifies this group as 'military officers down to the rank of Colonel, Mehler (2008), p.8

142 Luckham, Robin (1995), *Dilemas of Military Dismengagement and Democratization in Africa*, Ids Bulletin-Institute of Development Studies, 26, 2, 49-61, p.54

143 For a comprehensive discussion of foreign support to regime survival see Bayart (1999), and Jackson and Rosberg (1982)

144 Weingrod (1968); see also Lemarchand, René and Keith Legg (1972), *Political Clientelism and Development: A Preliminary Analysis*, Comparative Politics, 4, 2, 149-178 Gould, David J (1980), *Patrons and Clients: the Role of the Military in Zairian Politics*, in Mowoe, Isaac James, The Performance of Soldiers as Governors: African Politics and the African Military University Press of America, Washington, pp.500f

increase the client's income and reputation – the foreign military advisor would decisively influence respective decision making back home. Via the private path, or the military one, or the bureaucratic way to wealth accumulation, everyone involved uses the network that shows the best prospects.[145] To any military officer this may not necessarily be within the armed forces' career path.[146] External patrons of the military may become detached from their clients once a military ruler decides to civilianise his image; the examples of Habyarimana of Rwanda and the arms lobbyist 'Papamadit' Mitterrand spring to mind. The private international arms industry takes over the patrons' role, under facilitation by former military international patrons. Hence, 'the disproportionate support that outsiders give to Third World military organisations might be lending [them] extra strength vis-à-vis their competitors within their state'.[147] This strength adds to the advantages that the military gains from its political positioning, as mentioned above.

2.4.4 The Blurring of Civil-military Distinctions in Africa

In the 19th century, African CMR knew tensions similar to contemporary European ones. In Nigeria, for example, a system of constant checks and balances between a highly professional Yoruba military and the civilian ruler 'prevent[ed] clashes between the civil and military administrations'.[148] There was awareness that 'there would be no peace […] as long as professional warriors were allowed to dominate politics'.[149] In 1894 this balance failed and the British resident governor was asked to arrest the commanding general, who was not complying with governmental orders. With this decision Nigeria entered

145 Bayart, Jean François (1993), The State of Africa: the Politics of the Belly, Longman, Harlow, p.95

146 An increasing number of African soldiers (for example Ugandans in Iraq and Western military in practically all conflict zones) opt for a career in private security enterprises.

147 Tilly (1992), p.218

148 Ajayi (1965), p.74

149 ibid. (1965), p.77

the complex civil military dialectic of parallel systems of local rule and colonial power. In general, in most of Africa, as Jane Chanaa has put it, 'state and society are not exclusive domains'.[150] She continues:

> Formal and informal boundaries are inherently blurred. Security forces are also neither professional nor objective in the traditional sense of the words. Informal security communities exist in which security is not just the preserve of the state but also a whole multiplicity of actors'

For decades, African military involvement in politics was interpreted as a materialisation of the civil-military tension immanent in Western society and, thus, as an anachronistic fall-back to Bonapartism. It was overseen that African *coups d'état* were actually never purely military affairs, but always had a strong civilian component, if not predominance – pointing to a constantly smouldering rivalry among elite groups of civilian and military peers, rather than to a civil-military standoff.[151] According to Samual Decalo 'an examination of the evidence does not reveal very sharp distinctions between civilian and military leadership in African countries'.[152]

Scholars such as Eisenstadt and Roninger even hesitate to recognise the military as a type of formal social organisation and see it simply as a model to structure the flow of resources, of interpersonal interaction and of exchanges in society. Unequal power over resources at the heart of this system constitutes and maintains 'an extremely hierarchical inter subjective culture of relationships', and the military finds itself in a position comparable to any grouping or individuals fighting for a relative advantage relative to other clientelist channels of advancement. [153]

150 Chanaa (2002), pp.40, 44

151 Except for Liberian Master-Sergeant Doe, and Guinean Captain Camara, putschists commanded respective countries' largest military units, or were staff officers of miniscule forces

152 Decalo (1990), p.17

153 Eisenstadt and Roniger (1980), p.60

Its official role as the defender of the state's sovereignty is non-congruent with its actual place in society, which is in fact framed by the intra-elite contest. As a result, African soldiers of the same armed forces owe their acquiescence to different or similar personal patron officers. The client soldiers' interpersonal relationships are thus indirect, via their patrons. Practically, they are part of competing groups of stakeholders with regard to a variety of economic, ethnic and personal grievances.[154] A particularity of African views of what armed forces should owe to society, in other words '*Une armée pour quoi faire*', is its strong involvement in the economic and infrastructural development of society.[155] Unlike the Western understanding that there should be clear separation of army and society at large, African soldiers across the continent see non-combat roles for soldiers being realised by constructing schools or bridges, or even getting involved in the banking business or the management of plantations. The idea that military equipment or personnel should only be used to wage war is seen as unpractical and a waste of resources. In a number of states this attitude has produced a range of non-combat utilisations of troops. Interestingly, even this particularity in the assignment of the role of the African military, now rejected by Western military professionals, is part of the military inheritance from Europe. The FP annual report for Ruanda-Urundi 1944 indicates that the military should be employed in the social and economic evolution of the colony (*dans l'évolution sociale et économique de la colonie*), in other words, what is normally understood as an original contribution of post-colonial Africa goes back to doctrinal discussions at the Belgian general staff.[156]

154 Decalo, Samuel (1976), Coups and Army Rule in Africa: Atudies in Military Style, Yale University Press, New Haven, pp.14-16

155 See Fontrier (2005)

156 AA, Africa Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1944), Rapport Annuel de la Force Publique, Ministère des Affaires Etrangères Belge,, Leopoldville

2.4.5 The Military Sub-culture

The military culture is shaped by this condition and reflected by the position of the military with regard to the civilian segment of the state. The particular Central African political culture, as will be demonstrated in our case studies, finds its expression and carrier-medium in the prevailing personal, indirect-rule regimes, in which the military is important.[157]

Most obvious seems to be the heritage of a military sub-culture. As demonstrated in the volume by Britt et al., the military sub-culture had its own distinct space within colonial political cultures.[158] Features of political cultures also include a variety of interacting sub-cultures. Organisational, bureaucratic sub-cultures and the military sub-culture are intertwined with group dynamics at the socio-psychological level and with personal survival strategy at the individual level. This is where these levels share characteristics that strengthen each other: hierarchism; extreme secrecy (mistrust out of fear to show a weakness, imagined or real) and self-protection against rivals for access; and superstition, which is very much due to the perception of a lack of upwards social mobility that can only be overcome by submissive behaviour or by plotting against someone (often through witchcraft, a fact that again boosts secrecy and reinforces the impression of individual vulnerability).[159] The repercussion of this combination is a strengthening of closed society conditions. The inability to share information – which would probably be a way out of this

157 Having said this, a perception of central African political culture as 'particular' is shared by many sub-Saharan Africans, as this author can confirm from numerous discussions with non-central Africans on the subject matter.

158 See Britt, et al. (2006), esp. pp.21f, see also English, Allan D (2004), Understanding Military Culture: A Canadian Perspective, McGill-Queens University Press, Montreal, pp.24f

159 Several observers have stressed the importance of superstition as a tool to overcome constant social uncertainty by eliminating the power of mere coincidence, see Kapferer, Bruce (2002), Beyond Rationalism: Rethinking Magic, Witchcraft and Sorcery, Berghahn Books, New York; Lindhardt, Martin (2012), *Who Bewitched the Pastor and Why Did He Survive the Witchcraft Attack?* , Canadian Journal of African Studies, 46, 2, 215-232; Reynolds, Suzan (1997), Questioning Misfortune: The Pragmatics of Uncertainty in Eastern Uganda, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge

circulate behaviour, without being suspected of being a conspirator – is hence not part of this culture.

2.5 Conclusion

To understand the particular African setting that hampered modern state-building, one needs to understand how African state formation was undercut by the import of the colonial façade state, and how African elites within these colonies adopted this early 'quasi-state' and eventually made it their own, thereby avoiding the social contract with the newly created nations. Hybrid states are actually what one found in colonial Africa, as they were not entirely ruled by colonial powers. This lack of control over the whole territory and the entire population continued into independence (rim-states) and until the present time represents an obstacle to building directly-ruled states, more so in the Congo and Cameroon than in Rwanda, where such efforts are under way. Overall, the configuration of African international society resembles European pre-Westfalian conditions of state formation.

What happened in state-strengthening development in Europe was, however, not applied to these states' dependent overseas colonial territories. As a result it is necessary to establish the stage of state formation or of state-building in Central Africa by addressing the most salient features of state/military-formation that will help us to analyse African conditions:

- First, rulers' unwillingness or disinclination and inability or incapacity to impose direct rule over a multiplicity of centres of power, including the military;
- Secondly, the central role of the army in the consolidation of a strong state; and
- Thirdly, the element of bargaining and participation in the political culture.

Chapter Three: The Congo – the army that never was

We will now apply Robert Jackson's analytical approach on the quasi-ness of statehood to assess the quasi-ness of the armed forces of the Congo. The quasi-statehood of the Congo is notorious for representing the so-called failed state. However, the Congo state, as will be demonstrated, had never existed in the first place because it fell back into the stage of state formation when state-building failed after independence.

In 1960 the United Nations (UN) had to deploy a major military operation to ensure the territorial integrity of the country against its own mutinous armed forces, secession attempts, and foreign infringement. Fifty years on, the largest ever UN peacebuilding and state-building operation, MONUSCO, is now almost ten years on the ground, with no end in sight.[1] This chapter will demonstrate that Congolese post-colonial designed state-building was aborted instantly after independence, and that the country reverted to a process of non-directed state formation. This had implications for the role and function of the armed forces in society. Congolese post-colonial history reveals a circle of corresponding state-weakening policies and military-weakening measures. The national armed forces failed to play both their political function as a pillar of the social contract, and their technical military function.

After a look at the historical development of the Congo to provide information to assess the military's actual role in society, the chapter addresses the degree of application of state-strengthening measures or state-weakening policies and the political culture of which the military is part. This

1 Ntanda Nkere, quoted by Fessy, Thomas (2012), *DR Congo: Celebrating 50 Years of Chaos*, BBC News World, 30 June 2010, online edition/np, Monusco is accompanied by various large scale support operations of the international community, bilateral and multilateral, and contributions by hundreds of NGOs

will in turn allow us to address the military's concrete technical roles in comparison to that which it claims to represent.

1 Congo Military-Formation

1.1 Congo Free State and the Belgian Colony

Two distinct stages divide the period of foreign rule in the Congo: firstly, the Congo Free State, and secondly the Belgian colonial construct as of 1908.

The Congo Free State (CFS) of Leopold II was a private estate with international recognition but without external sovereignty, whose existence was guaranteed by all of the great powers, which made it unnecessary to secure it externally.[2] It had no government other than the Belgian King's emissaries. Internally, frequent temporary domestic licenses to exploit defined territories, and to police them, were sold to the highest bidder. This move materially undermined empirical domestic sovereignty over the colonial state.[3] What Congolese encountered as the state, they called *Bula Matari*, 'the stone-crusher'. Originally this term referred to the detonations of the early track building for the railway. It then became a nickname of Henry Morten Stanley, Leopold's first chief inspector, and then evolved as a synonym for the state. Hence, whomever the Congolese found in the seat of the most powerful became Bula Matari, no matter what this authority's legal stand as a state.

Because of the idiosyncrasy of the CFS, it 'made no sense of distinguishing between interior and exterior security functions'[4] because the protocol of the 1885 Berlin agreement stated that the Congo Free State would

2 Leopold was chairman and the only shareholder of the Association internationale du Congo, the company that 'owned' the country relabelled CFS and internationally recognised by The United States of America, the German Empire, Austria-Hungary, and the Netherlands in 1884, Spain, France, Russia, Sweden and Norway, Portugal, Belgium, Denmark, the Ottoman Empire, Switzerland, and the Republic of Liberia in 1885, and Japan in 1890

3 This arrangement was maintained until 1910, two years into the establishment of the Belgian colony. Later the pattern was repeated both by the Belgians and then Mobutu

4 Shaw, Bryant P (1984), Force Publique, Force Unique: the Military in the Belgian Congo, 1914-1939, University of Wisconsin. unpublished PhD thesis, p.11

have to remain militarily neutral.[5] Hence, 'army' would be a misnomer for its military organisation, the *Force Publique* (FP).[6] The FP was an international conglomerate of mercenary officers and NCOs with pan-African soldiers, created by the Belgian home secretary.[7] One typical example for an average FP garrison is given for 1884 as comprising two liberated slaves from Cabinda (Angola), seventeen men from Zanzibar, and eleven Nigerian Haussa. In 1905 120 out of 217 officers were Belgians, seventy-one Italians, thirteen Danes, six Norwegians, five Swedes, one Swiss, and an American who became the first FP general.[8] Civilian district commissioners, reporting only to the General Governor [*gouverneur général*], were direct superiors to the regional company commanders. From 1887 onwards Congolese soldiers from around the *Haut Congo*, the later Kinshasa province, were preferred for recruitment, and a first company of Congolese privates was created. This marks the moment when Lingala, a mix of dialects spoken in the home region of these soldiers, became the language of instruction of the FP, as Congolese recruits from other quarters of the country joined the force.[9] Service with the FP was contracted for an initial seven years, which could be renewed several times for a further three years each time. At the end of their career soldiers returned home with a small pension. Some Africans were given the opportunity to specialise and become communication operators, or administrative agents, or *gradés* (African NCOs) up to the rank of *adjudant chef*.[10] In general the deployment structure

5 General Act of the Berlin Conference on West Africa 26 February 1885 (1885), Berlin

6 Vermeersch, Arthur and Félicien Cattier (1906), Opérations police et opérations militaires, Hayez, Brussels, p.2

7 …who in turn retained the Belgian lieutenant Camille Coquilhat with the execution, see Newbury (2003), p.89

8 As a failed experiment in 1886 350 Zulus were hired, to be commanded by a Portuguese officer, Etat Major de la Force Publique (1950), Leopoldville, Congo Belge, pp.33-35

9 However, officially French was the language of command: 'Les commandements se font en Français', see Lemarchand, René (1970), Rwanda and Burundi, The Pall Mall Press, London, p.204

10 *Gradés* were trained specialists including drivers, accountants, carpenters, and cooks

of the FP was a dispersal of small units (pelotons of 30 men down to small one man outposts) all over the large country.

Organisational cohesion, professional discipline, or an *esprit de corps* did not develop, because the small units scattered all over the vast land were merely used for tax collection[11] and domestic services to the local district commissioners or *chefs de zones, secteurs* or *postes* respectively. Tasks included work as blacksmiths, carpenters, masons, or for house cleaning, or cooking.[12] Everyday tasks included wealth extraction, enforcement of heavy duties and coercion and contrasted strongly against a disciplined conventional military. Very early into the history of the FP there were concerns at the governmental level about local administrators who employed soldiers as bodyguards, granting them special privileges. According to Shaw:

> This kind of personalized military following drew the ire of the government [which] considered the military units as private armies [...] composed in violence of the regulations of the FP.[13]

Accordingly, African NCOs were promoted not according their merits but for client services to their superiors.[14] In order to limit the putative damage that soldiers could cause, an unprecedented 'de-modernisation' was ordered to exchange the FP's then modern breach loading rifles for older muzzle loading weaponry.[15] From the reluctance of implementation of this directive, and other routine disobedience like the non-implementation of an order to stop the

11 Tax collection actually means collection of rubber, as lively described in the contemporary literature, press, and diplomatic exchange, see for example Twain, Mark (1905), King Leopold's Soliloquy: A Defense of His Congo Rule, PR Warren, Boston, and *The Casement Report*, British Parliamentary Papers, 1904, British Parliamentary Papers, 1904, LXII, Cd. 1933

12 Shaw (1984), pp.23ff

13 Ibid. p.29

14 Ibid. p.29

15 Ibid. pp.31f

troops' excessive dispersal, one can deduce the level of mistrust that the leadership had against its own inferior chain of command.[16]

The history of the FP before the outbreak of the Great War is marked by brutality against the population, interrupted only by a chain of mutinies like in the first Congo capital Boma in 1900.[17] The military was used to physically separate the 'white' areas from the Africans.[18]

The military quality of the forces was fittingly poor. Even a long drawn-out campaign from 1892-95 against the Swahili slave traders in the Eastern Congolese Kivus could not help remodel the force into a distinct military body. In a 1906 report to Leopold's general governor the inspectors realistically arrived at the supposition that 'the Congo does not need an army. It needs a police but not only by name'.[19]

The second phase of alien over rule of Congo, the Belgian Congo colonial state as of 1908, was an 'inverted' quasi-state in the reversed sense of Robertson's definition.[20] The Belgian Congo had its own domestic laws, a budget, and an efficient administration, but remained without external sovereignty (as opposed to the Robertsonian quasi-state, which lacks domestic empirical existence but has external sovereignty). A governor responsible to the Colonial Commission at the Belgian ministry of foreign affairs administered the colony, but its ultimate legislative authority was the parliament in Brussels. The colony's own armed force kept the name *Force*

16 Ibid. p.36

17 Verhaegen, Benoit (1967), *L'Armée Nationale Congolaise*, Etudes Congolaises, 4, 1-31, p.3

18 For example Camp Kotokoli in Leopoldville separated the 'white' Gombo area from the Africans. Before July 1960 indigenous people had to get clear of Gombo before night fell. At six o'clock a gun would be fired to make everyone aware of the duty to leave, and the means to implement the rule was the chicotte, a heavy whip made of hippo skin. The chicotte was abandoned in 1955, testimony of Congolese veteran, interview CO 12 Kinshasa, July 2011

19 Quoted by Vermeersch and Cattier (1906), p.260, this author's translation

20 Not all colonies were organised as colonial states. German policy under Bismarck avoided 'the flag following the trade' see Wehler, Hans-Ulrich (1969), Bismarck und der Imperialismus, Kiepenheuer & Witsch, Berlin

Publique. However, the original mercenary troops of the CFS were gradually phased out, and the FP was transformed into an all-volunteer, Belgian commanded, colonial military-cum-police. The FP was eventually extended into Katanga when Belgium reclaimed her economic monopoly back from a British company[21], as the value of this province in mineral riches became evident.[22] Under her Danish commander the Katangan section of the FP soon developed a military pre-eminence relative to the rest of the FP.[23]

The Belgian colonial government tried to distinguish itself positively from the rough Leopoldian regime (with the Colonial Charta of 1908 focusing on the protection of the colonial subjects) but failed to do so because its control of the armed forces was deficient: armed sorties in 1912 and 1913, which resulted in 240 and 511 killed African civilians respectively, could neither be prevented nor sanctioned, although they were considered illegal by the metropolitan authorities.[24] Between 1910 and 1913 the governor tried to introduce a security sector reform that should have separated the military from the civilian command.[25] This policy proposal got nowhere because interested district commissioners stalled the implementation until it eventually 'flopped'.[26] This is the second string that can be followed throughout Congo's armed force's history: firstly, general disobedience appears as a constant condition in the history of Congo's armed forces; and, secondly, administrators and

21 Tanganyika Concessions Ltd

22 Katanga units of the FP were also better equipped (Mauser rifles, Maxim machine guns, Krupp 7.5 guns) than the rest FP (Alpini fusils, bronze guns) for fear of British military companies in Zambia, see Lothaire, Roger (2008), *Les débuts de l'artillerie coloniale belge*, in Jacquij, Philippe, Jaarboek over uniformologie en krijgsgeschiedenis Koninklijke Vereniging Vrienden van het Legermuseum, Brussels, pp.69-100

23 Shaw (1984), pp.20f

24 Ibid. p.142

25 In its article two of the reform, the related document states that only active Belgian officers shall recruited as officers of the FP, AA, Africa Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs/Ministere des colonies (1913), FP (2422) no 28 R18 II 17, Brussels

26 Shaw (1984), pp.49, 53

responsible commanders merely paid lip service to reforms and improvements for the FP to transform it into a proper military.

With the start of World War I the FP was administratively but not militarily organised at company level. Shaw affirms that it possessed no semblance of a serious military organisation. Artillery, engineering, logistics or health services, everything that went beyond being a mere constellation of uniformed warriors, were non-existent. Only the Katanga forces were grouped in battalion-size units and possessed an autonomous military command.

Throughout its history the FP, rather than being a coherent and rigorously organised body with a cone-shaped chain of command, 'resembled a series of small disconnected military bands' directly reporting to the civilian cum military district commander.[27] This is part of a heritage of personalised command structure shaping the exclusive loyalty of soldiers to their direct commanders.

1.2 World War I

Officially militarily neutral in accordance with the Treaty of Berlin of 1885, the Congo was ordered by the Belgian government to join its war efforts after an attack by German forces against the port of Lukuga at Lake Tanganyika on 22 August 1914. Their first sortie in this war in September 1914 was to Cameroon. For two years, until the conquest of Jaunde (Yaoundé) on 1 January 1916, 570 FP soldiers – by then equipped with a single section of artillery – assisted the French colonial forces in the Cameroon campaign. Because of the FP's extreme degree of dispersal in the Congo it took until April 1916 to assemble a force strong enough to launch another campaign in

27 Ibid. p.18

East Africa.[28] Then 719 European officers and NCOs, and 11,698 soldiers and *gradés* under the command of the Belgian general Tombeur attacked Rwanda and took Kigali in May 1916, to continue to the German administrative centre in Tabora, Western Tanzania.[29] A third campaign against Mahenge (Tansanya Eastern high plateau) launched in mid- August 1917 on request of Great Britain was executed, under the command of the Belgian Colonel Huyghe, by 450 officers, 6,600 soldiers and grades, and more than 20,000 carriers.[30] A decisive victory remained however denied to the allies by the guerrilla tactics of the German von Lettow-Vorbeck.[31]

Officers and NCOs represented about half of the 3,263 Belgians who lived in the Congo at the outbreak of the war. The FP of 15,000 soldiers grew during the war to about 25,000 men.[32] Every battalion of approximately 600 men was supported by 450 'porteurs'[33], who had to be recruited and re-recruited, officially as *soldats de 2ème classe*, during the campaign, often forcefully. Without roads, this was the only form of transport possible. In total an estimated 260,000 Congolese had to serve as carriers for some time between 1915 and 1918.[34] However, as second class soldiers they would analogically remain second class citizens – in other words, mere subjects: with

28 Minutes of the Belgian War Cabinet, Le Havre, 1 December 1917, no 3775, FP (2422) no 28 R18 II 17

29 Interestingly, much of the fighting during this advance was against Askaris serving the Germans and their Rwandan allies. The Rwandans remained loyal to their German joint commander, and fought all the way to Tabora, although their alliance commitment ended at the boundary to Tanzania, interview with Major Gerard Nyirimanzi, military historian at the Rwandan MOD

30 Jacquij, Philippe and Pierre Lierneux (2008), *Les gradés et soldats de la Force publique pendant la guerre de 1914-1918*, in Jacquij, Philippe and Lierneux, Pierre, Annales d'uniformologie et d'histoire militaire Société Royale des Amies du Musée de l'Armée, Brussels, p.162

31 See Belgian Army General Staff (1929), Les campagnes coloniales belges, 1914-1918, Vol.3, Institut Cartographique Militaire, Brussels

32 Reyntjens, Filip (1985), Pouvoir et droit au Rwanda, Droit public et évolution politique, 1916-1973, Musée Royal de l'Afrique Centrale., Tervuren, pp.102ff

33 De Waele, Jan (2008), *Voor Vorst en Vaderland: Zwarte Soldaten en Dragers Tidens de Eerste Weredoorlog in Congo*, in Jacquij, Philippe, Jaaboek over uniformologie en Krijksgeschiedenis Koningklijke Vereniging Vrienden van het Legermuseum, Brussels, p.114

34 AA, Africa Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (ny), Archive de Guerre, 1914-1918, 663/28/2/19, Force Publique, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Brussels

an average of 28 per cent the annual mortality rate of carriers was even higher than that of soldiers, which reached ten per cent at its peak.[35] Soldiers did not live in good circumstances either. According to inspection reports the state of the FP's equipment and of the garrisons was pitiable, and the discipline accordingly low. Not only did the soldiers have to live in unhygienic conditions (described as *saleté repoussante*), they also received only a fraction of the amount of drinking water that was granted to white officers (one litre compared to three litres per day respectively).[36] The war did not change the FP as its main tasks remained unchanged.

1.3 The Inter War Period Colony

With the experience of the war the colonial government tried to preserve some of the professionalism gained during force deployments abroad. A total of six battalions of *Troupes en service territorial* (TST) and *Troupes campées* (TC) were formed. TSTs were miniscule units widely dispersed over the whole territory; TCs were garrisoned companies in each of the provinces. The latter were considered of some military value. It became official policy to rotate dispersed TSTs on a regular basis back to the TC troops, which were considered in better military order. Still, the largest TST unit to rotate was the peloton. Unfortunately, instead of improving the TST soldiers' discipline, the system eroded the discipline of the TCs. The influence from Kinshasa remained shallow, and command and control of TST units between rotations remained weak, leaving practically every second man at the permanent personal disposal of the regional civilian administrator.[37] This led to repeated military operations decided by 'men on the spot', which were regularly

35 Belgian Army General Staff (1929), p.438
36 De Waele (2008), p.128
37 Interview former Belgian Congo regional administrator, Brussels March 2010, and follow up e-mail exchange in 2011

criticised by successive Governor Generals as excessive. The incomplete military layout of the FP contributed to the bad results of operations. Inability to serve as a genuine military force was not compensated for by good policing, although the FP was meant to provide both services. The situation deteriorated over the years as soldiers got accustomed to *petits profits* from all sorts of corruption and illegal taxing, to the point that a mid-1930 report diagnosed that within a short time there would not be a single serious soldier left among the troops.[38] Lack of even minimal logistics drove the troopers to pillage villages. In sum one has to agree with Shaw's observation that the FP 'was not an army in the conventional sense of the word', and that its everyday tasks of tax collection and coercion subverted the development of a coherent, professional military.[39]

In spite of sporadic administrative restructuring measures to professionalise it, the force remained the same because its tasks did not change. Occasional violent uprisings by the population in the early 1920s, in 1926, and in 1931 were brutally subdued whilst, as a result of the global economic crisis, the living conditions of the military deteriorated.[40] Although the numbers of officers and soldiers were reduced before 1939 by 17 and 36 per cent respectively, the allocated reserves of, for instance ammunition, were not available for a military sortie when the Second World War started. After the Belgian defeat in Europe, Governor General Ryckmans in Leopoldville declared that the Congo would side with the allies, and in May 1940 the mobilisation brought the FP's strength to 18,000 troops plus 12,000 carriers.[41]

38 Shaw (1984), pp.89, 91, 95f

39 Ibid. p.333; we will again encounter this FP in the role of an occupational force in former German territory, where it acted completely independent from civilian control although nominally being under its supervision – see case study Rwanda

40 See AA, Africa Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1930), Rapport Annuel de la Force Publique 1929, Leopoldville; Bangoura (1993); AA (1930)

41 Jacquij, Philippe and Pierre Liernieux (2008), *Les soldats et gradés de la Force publique pendant la guerre 1940-1945: Abyssinie, Nigérie et Moyen-Orient*, in Jacquij, Philippe

1.4 World War II

During World War II the exiled government of Belgium in London decided to deploy the FP as its army against France in West Africa and Italy in Ethiopia, although a campaign of 13,000 FP against Vichy loyal Dahomey was aborted when the local French administration turned to De Gaulle's *France libre*.[42] In Abyssinia the FP, the so called 'Belgian contingent in Sudan', achieved a remarkable victory at Saio on 3 July 1941, capturing eight Italian generals and 5,000 troops. The FP also saw combat in a joint assault with the King's African Rifles on Asosa/Ethiopia.[43] Later on, about 10,000 FP guarded prisoner camps and fuel depots in the Sudan and Egypt, in order to relieve British military resources until 1944. Participation in the European theatre, however, was barred by strong British reservations.[44]

The Belgian government in exile considered it inappropriate that none of their military contributions to the war efforts came from Belgian-administered territory. Hence, to participate in the planned D-Day operations all of the training for Belgian fighter and bomber pilots (*entrainement de pilotage avancé)* was moved from Canada to a new base in Kamina/Katanga.

In January 1945 all Congolese troops were back home, and the 17,000 men strong FP returned to its peace time structure, divided into the usual TCs and TSTs now rebranded *Détachements en service territorial (DSTs)*. Attempts to form a colonial army attached to the Belgian ministry of defence, and a gendarmerie under the ministry of colonies, failed due to a lack of funding[45] and the FP remained the only regular armed force on the Congolese

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and Liernieux, Pierre, Annales d'uniformologie et d'histoire militaire Société Royale des Amis du Musée de l'Armée, Brussels, p.176

42 The soldiers had already disembarked in Nigeria, but returned home

43 AA (1944), p.17

44 Jacquij and Liernieux (2008), pp.176f

45 An independent police did not exist before 1950. An initial 2,000-strong police staff was built up to 7,500 in 1959, see Newbury (2003), p.35

Table 2: Congolese Spitfire aircraft were donated by Belgian citizens. Each province bought one plane that carried the respective names, like *Leopoldville*, *Katanga*, *Maniema*, photo Koninlijk Museum van het Leger en de Krijgsgeschiedenis, Brussels

territory until 1953, from which time the Belgian metropolitan army was present on the ground.[46] Overall, the state of discipline in the FP for the period between 1950 and 1957 was reported as good, but the level of organisation and training was evaluated as poor. For example, only one deserter, but forty-two missing (*disparus*) soldiers were reported. The authorities simply did not know where they had been sent.[47] For 1958 no sorties other than military parades were reported.[48] These so-called '*démonstrations de force*' or

46 Interview Be 8 with Belgian veteran who had completed his military conscription in Congo, Liège, 2012: see also Van Reybrouck, David (2012), Kongo Eine Geschichte, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt/Main, p.15; and Newbury (2003), p.36; garrisoned and non-active on Congolese territory, these forces were redeployed to Belgian Ruanda-Urundi after Congo's independence in 1960

47 AA, Africa Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1957), Rapport Annuel de la Force Publique 1957 FP 2463, Ministère des Affaires Etrangères Belge, Leopoldville, pp.43, 58

48 One former Belgian administrator confirmed to this author that during his period of service between 1953 and 1958 he never used the FP in his district, conversation with the former administrator for two territories in Kasai

'*promenades militaires*' at company level left a 'deep impression on the local populations'.[49]

By 1959 the military had made some progress towards professionalism. During the late 1950s the Belgians had profoundly modernised the FP technically. They had set up a considerable collection of rolling stock, commando units, and armoured (*blindés*) units – three such battalions at Kitona, Kamina and Banane in total.[50] Africanisation of the force had started in 1954, although a feasibility study for the FP general staff had advised against recruitment of African officers '*ni en temps de guerre, ni en temps de paix*'. According to this assessment, the Congolese '*mentalité infantile*` would frustrate any attempt to produce good officers.[51] Yet, military education at staff level was launched in Luluabourg in 1954, but at independence in 1960 there were no graduates higher than *sous-lieutenant*.[52] By 1960 the number of troops rose to 24,000 soldiers, living in military accommodation of different kinds, accompanied by about 30,000 women and children.

1.5 Confusion from the Beginning

Independence on 30 June 1960 did not result in the hoped for materialisation of a stable state. Only six days into self-government the armed forces of the young Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), as the country chose to name itself at independence, mutinied and nipped the post-colonial

49 Rapport Annuel 1958, p.76ff

50 This was the base in which the United States later anchored its military support, when it invested heavily in 1963 to fully equip six Congolese battalions. FP at the time also owned thousands of lorries and jeeps, and 11 airplanes with eight to ten seats. However, it was considered by its CIC Major General Janssen as of little military value against an organised attack, AA (1958), Inspection Report FP (2473) 239

51 This and the previous quote are from the study by Capitaine Howard, (1950), pp.11, 17; a similar view was still aired by a retired Belgian officer, who had trained Congolese military during throughout the 1980s. His assessment was that his students were persons who had never had the opportunity to learn the basic skill of learning and were as a result unable to acquire complex knowledge; interview Be 13 with the author, Liège, July 2012

52 Vanderstraeten, Louis-François (1985), De la Force publique à l'Armée nationale congolaise: histoire d'une mutinerie, juillet 1960, Académie Royale de Belgique, Brussels; a Second Lieutenant commands a section of twelve soldiers

state-building process in the bud. At that moment the only military force available to the government was a company of borrowed Ghanaian soldiers. The rebelling battalions as of 6 July were given the right to elect their own officers. The result showed clearly that the Congolese soldiers were not hostile to their former commanders: 255 out of 500 Belgian officers and NCOs were elected by the African soldiers of their units and remained for some time with the new armed forces. Particularly in the Kivu and Orientale provinces units stuck to their elected FP officers until 1964.[53]

Only another week after the start of the general mutiny of the Congolese armed forces, on 11 July, Katangan politicians, organised around Moïse Tshombé as *Conféderation des Associations Tribales de Katanga*, and supported by soldiers of what should have been the regular Congo army, began an armed campaign for secession from the central government. [54] This war was to last until January 1963. Secessionists of the Kasai province, led by 'His Imperial Majesty Kalonji' and supported by Belgian soldiers[55], launched their own campaign in August.[56]

Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba successfully ended the mutiny of the rump military left to Leopoldville by accepting the soldiers' major demands within one week, including promoting them *en masse.*[57] Former FP platoon sergeant (*adjutant*) Victor Lundala became commanding general (although then dismissed on 12 September); former FP sergeant Mobutu was promoted as colonel and head of the general staff (and about whom we will hear more!).

53 Interviews Be 6, Be 7 with two Belgian veterans, Woermont, Pettiaux, Brussels October 2011; see also Verhaegen (1967), p.11

54 Tshombé is actually a nick name of Moïse Kapenda meaning 'manioc' because his father made a fortune with manioc plantations, see Burk (1992), p.66

55 At least from June to September 1960

56 Ebenga, Jacques and Thierry N'Landu (2005), *The Congolese National Army: In Search of an Identity*, in Rupiya, Martin, Evolutions & Revolutions: A Contemporary History of Militaries in Southern Africa Southern Africa Institute for Security Studies, Pretoria, Pretoria, p.65

57 All members of the armed forces were promoted by one rank, leaving the army of 26,389 without a single private, see Vermeersch and Cattier (1906), p.13

The *Armée nationale congolaise* (ANC) was created by presidential decree on 8 July 1960 and sent to fight both the Kasai and the Katanga rebellions. In the course of this campaign former FP soldiers committed wide scale massacres against the population.

Simultaneously, two competing delegations arrived in New York to lobby for support for the government in Leopoldville, one sent by President Kasa-Vubu, the other by Prime Minister Lumumba. The Security Council chose Kasa-Vubu's delegation to talk to. During the subsequent constitutional standoff between President and Prime Minister, in which they dismissed each other from their respective positions, the ANC under the command of Joseph Mobutu perpetrated its first coup d'état, overthrowing the government on 14 September 1960. Two weeks later Mobutu suspended the first Congolese constitution.[58]

For some time the territory of the Congo housed four different governments, none of which was legitimate, and none covering 50 per cent of the territory. As shown by the map below, there was the *République du Congo-Léopoldville* of the *putschist* military junta in the capital Leopoldville (later Kinshasa); the *République libre du Congo* under Antoine Gisengy's *Mouvement National Congolais/Lumumba* faction residing in Stanleyville (later Kisangani) that held out until September 1961; Moïse Tshombé's Katangan secessionist government in Elisabethville (later Lubumbashi); and Albert Kalonji's South Kasai secessionists in Bakwanga (Mbuji-Mayi) until October 1962.[59] Little reported is the fact that even the provisional Katanga state had

58 Ebenga and N'Landu (2005), p.65

59 Ndaywel e Nziem, Ididore (1998), *Du Congo des Rébellions au Zaïre des Pillages*, Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines, 38, 150-152, 417-439, p.420

its own internal secession conflict with the Baluba people of Katanga, who, in turn, demanded independence under the leadership of Jason Sendwe.[60]

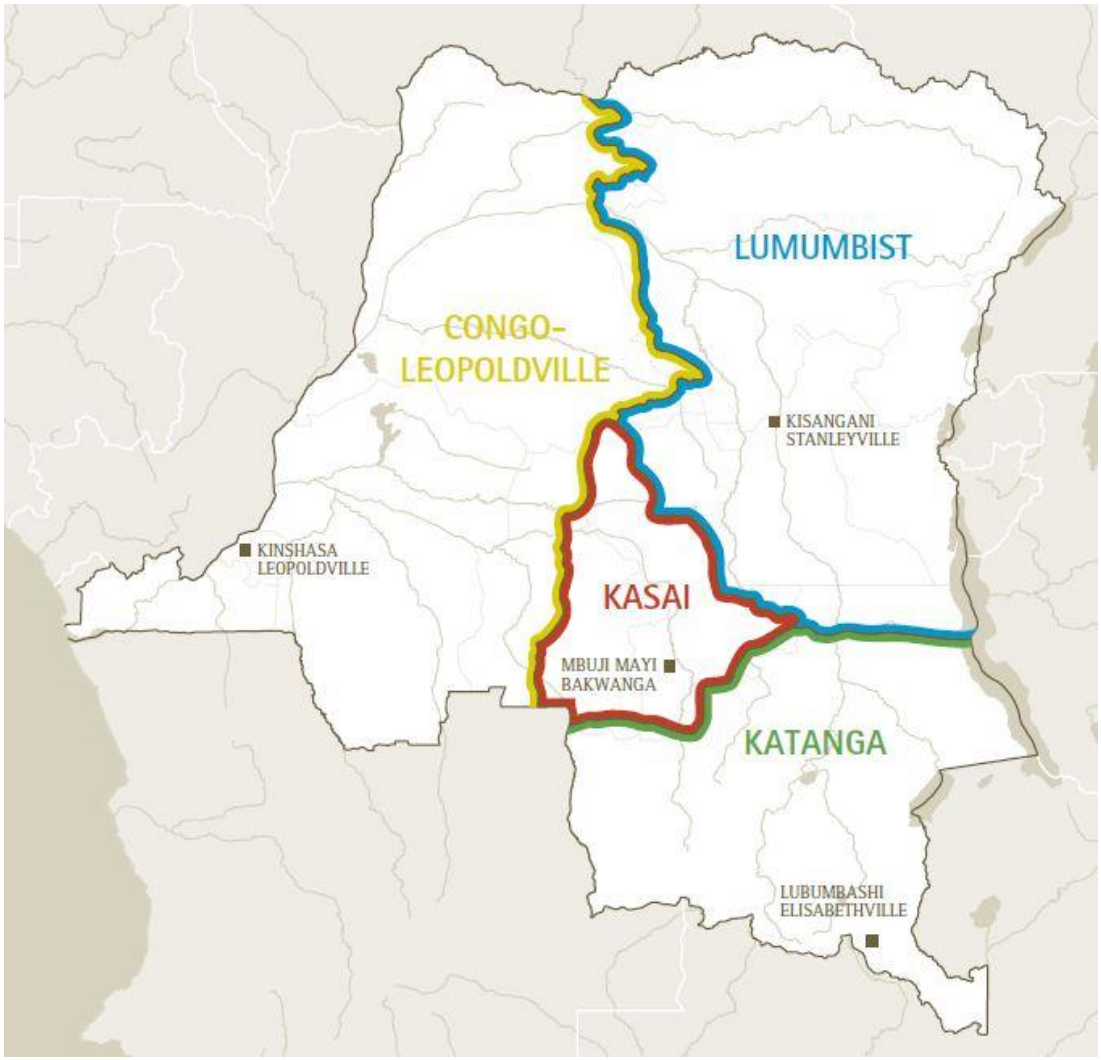

Table 3: Map of Congo in the 1960s

The ANC was unable to face about 600 Belgian troops supporting the Katangan secessionists whilst mutinying against the elected government and the local population. They needed the massive international support of the first United Nations peace support operation, UNOC, from July 1960 to June 1964, which established at least a certain territorial unity of the country. [61]

60 Lanotte, Olivier (2012), Online Encyclopedia of Mass Violence, www.massviolence.org/Chronology-of-the-Democratic-Republic-of-Congo-Zaire-1960-1997

61 United Nations (1960), *Resolution S/RES/143*, of 14 July 1960 six weeks into independence called for support to the Congo that that would enable its armed forces to, as it is put in the resolution, 'meet fully their tasks'. Operation ONUC also helped containing the

In spite of the apparently open conflict between Belgium and the DRC, 20 Belgian military advisors formally stayed until 1963, but other Belgian officers still in Congolese uniforms were gradually phased out. At the conclusion of the war, the officers of those units that had fought as Lumumbist rebels were integrated into the ANC, keeping their rebel ranks. This policy of reintregration of complete rebelling units, the so-called *mixage*, into the regular armed forces, a pattern actually inherited from the old FP, would come to haunt the Congolese armed forces well into the 21st century.[62]

To launch another fresh start for a Congolese army, two Belgian officials from the ministry of defence arrived in 1963 at the request of the government to make a thorough inventory and audit of the state of its armed forces' affairs and assets. Because the conflict between Belgium and the DRC over the Katangan question had not ended at the time, and the DRC had officially cut its relations with Brussels, these *conseillers* had to move across the River Congo to Brazzaville and return the three miles by boat to Kinshasa on a daily basis. Nevertheless the Belgian officers were provided with cars and aircraft, and they succeeded in finding scattered ANC units all over the country.

For the period from 1960 to 1972 the military is described by contemporary observers as a mere continuation of the structures of the colonial FP, although some tentative restructuring was launched after 1967. During this era there was never a coherent military body in the Congo. Infantry 'battalions', the largest units, were dispersed all over the country just like former FP *troupes campées* were. At no moment did larger, versatile,

ANC mutiny in Thysville, where Moroccan forces disarmed the whole garrison of Camp Hardy, Scholl-Latour, Peter (1989), Mord am grossen Fluß, DTV, München, p.149

62 This was done after the mutinies of 1895, 1897, 1900, 1944 and 1960.

autonomous units at brigade, let alone division level, as one should expect from an armed force of this size, exist.[63]

1.6 The Cold War

Until 1965 mutinies on various scales were daily occurrences, and only from 1965 onward were new soldiers, who had not been members of the Belgian FP, recruited. Between 1967 and 1973 the training of units was intensified, with the total military *coopérants* rising to 245 on average per year. However, this training, provided at tactical level only, was executed in a way that would not allow the establishment of a single, coherent, military body.

Most of the attention that the ANC gained at the time was for its dubious performance in South Kasai. After two years of Kasai self-rule under an increasingly tribalised and violent regime, the ANC attacked. In the course of their campaign, ANC soldiers killed as many insurgents and other civilians as they could capture.[64] Dag Hammerskjöld described both the massacres of unarmed civilians committed by the ANC near Mbuji-Mayi and the murder of an estimated 6,000 Baluba people by the Katangan gendarmes as genocide.[65]

By 1966 the war ended, and about 10,000 Katangan fighters retreated to Angola, taking their arms with them, whilst 5,000 joined the ANC as nine, basically independent, commando battalions. Although the integration of the Kasai fighters by brassage was suggested, a method that would have meant the dissolution of their units and integration of individual soldiers in other units, the majority of the Kasai fighters refused this, and most of them joined their

63 The formation of brigade level units was not achieved before 1979, well after, and in response to, lessons learned during the two Shaba wars

64 One example was the capture of Manono when 50 POWs were mutilated before being shot, in another case 880 civilians were killed by the ANC in Kongolo in February 1962, see Kestergat, Jean (1986), Du Congo de Lumumba au Zaïre de Mobutu, Paul Legrain, Brussels, pg.123-125

65 Burk (1992), pp.102, 106

comrades in Angola, in the course preparing huge arms caches to prepare their later return with the support from locals.

A short time after the Katanga secession had finally been repulsed, another part of the country broke away. When President Kasa-Vubu's policy turned out to discriminate against politicians from the Eastern regions, war resumed. Major uprisings in the East and South, triggered by former Congolese minister Mulele, and by Laurent-Désiré Kabila respectively, shuttered the DRC. This armed rebellion was started in April 1964 by the Lumumbist *Conseil National de Libération* (CNL) and lasted well into 1966. At the end of June 1964 the UN troops had left, and already in August 1964 the rebels, once more including deserted ANC soldiers, captured Kisangani and declared it the capital of the new People's Republic of the Congo.

Again, the Lumumbist rebellion could only be defeated by foreign support: firstly it was contained by Rhodesian and South African mercenaries, and eventually US aircraft dropped Belgian paratroopers – this time fighting on the side of Kinshasa.[66] Christophe Gbenye's *CNL* declared a 'second independence' in order to liberate the Congo from its alleged new foreign masters, the USA and Belgium, represented by a 'puppet regime' in the capital. [67] This uprising caused an estimated 20,000 victims. Alleged local intelligensia-collaborators were intentionally targeted.[68]

The exceptional brutality of these uprisings and of the response was due to the pseudo-religious mobilisation of Mulelist fighters, the Simba, on the one hand, and to the ruthlessness of the European mercenaries executing government policy on the other. Poorly equipped and steadfastly believing in

66 Exiled Cubans in US aircraft provided ground support, see Michaels, Jeffrey H (2011), Breaking the Rules: The CIA and Counterinsurgency in the Congo 1964–1965, International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence, vol. 25 Issue 1, pg. 130-159

67 For details on these campaigns see Burk (1992)

68 Ngu Ekigole, Mary (2010), 50 Anniversary Cameroon Armed Forces: Prime Minister inaugurates Cerebatorium, The Gateway of Government, Office of the Prime minister, 9 December, p.30

their invulnerability, the Simbas were easily defeated by small sections of mercenaries because of the latter's fire-discipline.[69] About 2,000 European and suspected 'westernised' Congolese, who were taken hostage in Kisangani and other places, were eventually liberated by a regular Belgian force, the 1st *paracommando* regiment.[70]

In the meantime, in July 1964, the former Katangan rebel leader, Moïse Tshombé, returned from his exile to be appointed Prime Minister. He won the national elections of May 1965 only to be toppled by General Joseph Mobutu's second *coup d'états* on 24 November 1965.[71] At the time Congolese armed forces, similarly to civilian administrative services, were nowhere close to representing coherent national institutions. Further armed rebellions broke out in 1966, lasting well into 1967. Firstly there was a mutiny by ex-Katangan gendarme veterans who were earlier reintegrated into the FAC in Kisangani as their leaders returned to the capital, and who did not want to accept the coup against Tshombé. Secondly, only a year later, the same ex- Katangan soldiers, this time supported by many of the foreign mercenaries that once fought against the Katanga uprising, marched eastward from Kisangani to occupy Bukavu, in the South of Kivu. What had started as a protest over unpaid wages culminated into yet another secession attempt as the mutineers and mercenaries declared their own republic in order to have negotiation leverage against the capital, renamed Kinshasa. It took the biggest part of the

69 Similar to later Maï-Maï (water.water) fighters, the Simba believed to be invulnerable due to holy waters sprinkled over their bodies.

70 Operations Dragon Rouge (Kisangani), Dragon Noir (Isiro), Dragon Blanc (Bunia), Dragon Vert (Watsa); 392 European civilians were killed during the uprising, Villafaña, Frank R (2012), Cold War in the Congo, Transaction Publishers, New Brunswick, NJ, p.94

71 Tshombé would eventually be charged for high treason in 1995. He went to exile to Spain, from where he was abducted and brought to an Algerian prison, where he died in 1967.

ANC to besiege them. When the rebels eventually ran out of ammunition, in November 1967, they retreated to Rwanda.[72]

Western, especially Belgian, German, and US involvement provoked a reaction from the Communist block; the assassination of Prime Minister Lumumba, executed by Belgians on behalf of the CIA, and the steady support by these states and Italy, Taiwan, and South Korea to General Mobutu's regime, triggered arms deliveries and personnel support to Congolese rebels from the Soviet Union, China, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Cuba, Mali and Tanzania.[73] Congo had become a battlefield of the Cold War.

1.7 The Mobutu Era, a By-product of the Cold War

Although the regular Congolese army, rebranded the *Forces Armées Zaïroises* (FAZ) in October 1971, had never performed well, its deliberate neglect by the political leadership during the following ten years would weaken it even further. Nevertheless, in a certain nostalgic retrospection, the period from 1972 to 1979 is considered by many observers as the 'Golden Age' of the Congolese armed forces. Contemporary witnesses widely agree that, if ever, this was the age of a Congolese army meeting the definition of a professional, differentiated yet unified coherent military body, able to perform large scale military operations including inter-state warfare.[74] Although much of the more critical literature published in the post-Mobutu era claims that the military value of the Congolese forces has been poor at any given time, according to a contemporary German military observer 'at least tactical combat level they

72 See the account of one of the mercenaries, Kimonyo, Jean Paul (2010), Understanding Rwanda's Journey publisher

73 The most spectacular equivalent to Western mercenaries was the failed Cuban support to Laurent-Désiré Kabila's Tanzania based rebels, see Gálvez, William (1999), Che in Africa: Che Guevara's Congo diary, Ocean Press, New York

74 Interviews with Congolese and Western veterans in the DRC, Belgium, Germany, and France in 2010 through 2013

were capable fighters'.[75] At the operational level, however, it was foreigners who organised military campaigns.

After 1971 the politicisation of the armed forces began with the process of authenticity and Zaïrinisation – including rebranding the DRC 'Zaïre' – and the construction of a one-party state.[76] The *Mouvement populaire de la révolution* (MPR) became the superior political institution of the state with all other institutions, including the FAZ as of 1977, subordinate to the party and its leader, the *président fondateur*.[77] The dictator's posts included Supreme Commander, Commander-in-Chief, President of the Superior Council of Defence and Minister of Defence.[78] Every officer had to be a member of the MPR, and promotions depended more on active involvement in the party than on military qualities. In other words, the military had become Mobutu's FAZ.[79] There is general agreement among ex-FAZ officers interviewed for this study that a devaluation of the armed forces was systematically pursued after a short-lived (between 1979 and 1982) period of personal interest of the president in owning a prestigious army that should underline his status as *primus inter pares* among African heads of states. However, Mobutu's desire for a strong force was ambiguous. For instance, although officers were trained abroad, for example, ten Congolese officers had been trained in Hamburg, to maintain all of the communication devices that West-Germany had donated, they were deployed to unrelated posts when they returned.[80]

75 Oberst Valentin, Co 10 Kinshasa 2011

76 'Zaïre' is actually a Portuguese adaptation of the Kikongo word for a big stream.

77 In one of the many propaganda books issued in Zaïre, all of which were officially authored by the president, the FAZ is described as 'Armée politiquement intégrée au sein du MPR', see ANRDC, Anonymus (1987), *Panorama des 20 ans du Mouvement Populaire de la Revolution, Présidence de la République, Kinshasa*, p.71, courtesy of Professor Lumenga Neso, director of the National Archive of DRC

78 Van Bilsen, Jef (1993), Kongo, 1945-1965: Het einde van een kolonie, Davidsfonds, Leuvenart, pp.17, 18

79Van Bilsen (1993) art.4

80 Interview Co 13 with former ANC communications officer, Kinshasa March and July 2011

Congo's military weakness, obvious from the late 1970s until the mid-1990s, was not considered a structural problem, but thought to be due to a mere lack of quantitative means to keep up a seemingly well-developed general military capacity.[81] The propaganda effect of a country wide film screenings of the parading 'Division Kamaniola' was limited, and neglect of this unit ever after contributed to its military weakness. In 1981 for short period things seemed to improve. Foreign military observers were much impressed by the combined-arms field training exercise of the FAZ in 1981, thereby ignoring the fact that is was entirely commanded by Belgian officers. This 'goodwill' assessment of the FAZ was probably due to wishful thinking among Western partners, desperate for success within a Cold War setting that saw their influence waning in Asia and Central America, and among the Congolese, proud to have on display the biggest and best among African armies.[82] However, this famous field training remains the only successful event in the history of the Congo armed forces.

The reality was, un surprisingly, different. With the decision to make membership in Mobutu's party obligatory for all military, the personal rule system of the *president-fondateur* became the key operating principle of the armed forces. As one exiled former general of the FAZ explained to this author, military ranks became utterly irrelevant within the force by the early 1970s.[83] What counted was one's place in the hierarchy of the party, including membership in party committees. According to the source, on occasions a brigadier would, contrary to military customs, salute a major – not only in the rooms of the party central committee, but also when they met in the barracks.

81 Interview Co 4 with former commander of the Division Kamaniola (1982-1985), General Mukobo, Brussels, October 2011

82 Interview Co 11 with former German military observer, Kinshasa July 2011

83 Interview Co 4 General Mukobo, Brussels, October 2011

Another witness[84] gave the example of a battalion commander's title as *Le Président sous-sectionnaire du MPR et Commandant du 12 ème battalion,* clearly indicating the superiority of the party position over that in the military chain of command. With the establishment of a corps of political commissars (*Mobilisation Propagande et Animation politique*), the party had soon become the prevailing road of access to resources and influence.

This politicisation of the army had several other serious implications. Firstly, it devalued the military proficiency of the FAZ. De-professionalising the armed forces (Congolese witnesses usually refer to the term '*banalisation de l'armée*') was sped up by the execution of capable officers during political purges. In 1978, for example, ten generals who had graduated from the Royal Belgian military academy were executed; some of them directly after landing from Brussels at the Kinshasa airport. One former Congolese captain, who was dismissed during one of these purges, told this author that all soldiers ranking from corporal to major who came from Kasai were removed in 1978, and a non-specified number of them shot dead.[85] Instead men linked to Mobutu, for family or loyalty reasons, were promoted to supreme ranks, such as Generals Likulia, Singa, and Babia.[86] Whereas 75 per cent of generals originated from Equateur in the mid- 1970s, the average reached 90 per cent by the end of Mobutu's rule in 1996.[87] Soldiers from Kasai, Katanga, or the East had little prospect for advancement.

84 Interviews Be 1 Colonel Lambert, Brussels, 2011, 2012

85 Only for his own military region Kinshasa could the witness be sure about the selective character of the purges. For other regions he relied on hearsay from former comrades. The relevant data are missing from the national archive in Kinshasa/ Capt. Kabuya, Brussels

86 Turner, Thomas (1979), Problems of the Zairian Military, Wheeling College, courtesy of the Royal Museum for Central Africa, Tervuren, Wheeling, pp.25f

87 For another account of Mobutu's tactical manoeuvres to de-professionalise the officer corps and to tribalise the army see Braeckman, Colette (1992), Le Dinosaure - Le Zaïre de Mobutu, Fayard, Paris

Secondly, most of the 'political officers', a function created for all acting staffs and command posts, were exclusively recruited from the region of origin of Mobutu, the North Western Equateur province. Third, in practical terms the weakening of the armed forces was continued through organisational decisions, leading to an atomisation of the FAZ. Not only were additional military and paramilitary units founded, like the German-trained *Garde Civile,* under Mobutu's brother in law Baramoto,[88] and the Israeli-trained presidential escort and Republican Guard, which were not controlled by the regular military command structure, but the armament and training of each by another foreign nation's military deepened their heterogeneity. Equipment on the battalion level, and sometimes even within battalions, did achieve a certain standardisation, but overall as a result, the FAZ used twelve different rifles, 20 guns and ten different mortars of both Western and Eastern calibres, making interoperability between any two battalions extremely difficult.

Fourth, poverty commanded the lives of ordinary soldiers and their families, which stayed with them at military camps. The ironic rule *débrouillez-vous* formed the baseline for civilians as well as military employees: all public servants were forced 'to prioritize personal gain' and discipline or loyalty to their duties became a secondary matter at best.[89] Carlo Cornelis gives the example of the Zaïre Air Force: its personnel either used the equipment to run their own clandestine airline, undercutting the rates of Air Zaïre, with the ground personnel acquiring the passengers, whilst other members of the service sold spare parts for the planes, and fuel.[90] Left to their own devices,

88 A former police officer was promoted general when he became Mobutu's brother-in-law, Kpama Baramoto is notorious for the 1990 slaughter of 150 students at Lubumbashi

89 Lugan, Bernard (1997), Histoire du Rwanda: De la Préhistoire à nos jours, Bartillat, Paris, p.96; Débrouillez-vous, 'fend for yourself' was the advice Mobutu had for the people. Proverbial irony made this remark the fictive additional Article Quinze of the Congo constitution: débrouillez-vous!

90 Cornelis (2003)

discipline was severely undermined and soldiers' individual behaviour contributed to the further undermining of the military.

The non-payment of salaries contributed to destroying the little discipline and thus self-confidence and pride of the soldiers that existed. Salaries of active soldiers, and to widows of service men, never went beyond the pockets of battalion commanders. If ever, the payments were a personal favour of a patron to his clientele. The clientele system, crystalizing around a core based on regional discrimination, increasingly became the backbone of the officer corps.

Then, the role of the FAZ was for years restricted to coercive action against the population, whenever protests occurred, such as during the major student strikes of June 1969 and June 1971. In the latter case unruly students were punished by means of forced recruitment into the army. As the regime security arm, the FAZ showed a 'stellar performance', as Michael Schatzberg put it, whenever deployed against unarmed opposition, especially after the FAZ's 'reign of terror' in Moba and Kalemie (Kasai) in 1984 and 1985 respectively.[91]

Non-military tasks (policing) in combination with illegal extortion further eroded the self-esteem and the already mediocre public reputation of the armed forces. The demise of the public services soon infected soldiers who were in a similar position. The impact of blatant corruption was enhanced by a strategy of tribalisation of the officer corps. According to Georges Nzongola, Mobutu's destructive policy eventually backfired when the client officers, many

91 Schatzberg, Michael G (1988), The Dialectics of Oppression in Zaire, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, pp.55,68

of whom were related to Mobutu directly or by marriage, plundered the FAZ shamelessly, stole the soldier's salaries, and sold the equipment.[92]

The poor motivation of the FAZ became evident with the two Shaba wars in 1977 and in 1978. In 1977 former Congolese officer Nathaniel Mbumba had founded the *Front pour la Libération Nationale du Congo* (FLNC) and recruited Katangan veterans, who were exiled to Angola after the war of secession.

During the first Shaba war, no brigade or division was available to respond to an invasion. Companies from all quarters were put together to form new brigades, and the transport organised with requisitioned trucks from mining companies. The result was a logistic nightmare, which left soldiers without ammunition, and gunners with tables and manuals in Chinese writing.[93] This level of disorganisation of the FAZ was probably one incentive for the comparatively small force of 6,000 Katanga Gendarmerie and FNLC (equivalent to five battalions) to assault the Congo. FAZ units in the attacked province were staffed to maximal 35 per cent of their normal strength. Only the famous North Korean trained Division Kamaniola did effectively represent a fighting force. There were no logistic installations available, no communication devices, and no operational staff ready to perform.

The Shaba wars left the general staff paralysed, and increasingly micromanagement of the armed forces crept in. Mobutu 'personally promoted and dismissed officers, ordered equipment and directed military operations'.[94] As a result of Mobutu's strategy, such was the state of the armed forces that they would immediately collapse at first sight of an armed enemy:

92 Nzongola-Ntalaja, Georges (2003), The Congo from Leopold to Kabila, Zed Books, London, p.153

93 The specification for the engine oil of Chinese tanks was secret, obliging the Congolese to rely on Chinese deliveries. Only in 1979 was a sample sent for analysis to the Royal Belgian military school in Brussels. It turned out to be identical with oil available at Belgian petrol stations!

94 Fessy, Thomas (2012), *DR Congo: Celebrating 50 Years of Chaos*, BBC News World, online edition, np, p.66

undisciplined, corrupt, frustrated, ill-equipped, and unequally trained – thereby providing little of the coercive means necessary to protect the regime.

A Franco-Egyptian-Moroccan military intervention came to the rescue of the Congolese army.[95] Fifteen hundred Moroccan soldiers, commanded by 40 French officers and NCOs, were deployed to Kolwezi on 11 April. The entire logistics of the operation was in the hands of French and Belgian *coopérants*, with the French organising the support of the Moroccans, and the Belgians that of the Congolese[96] and Egyptian pilots manned French fighter bombers in support of the campaign.

Having utterly failed to defend the state, the upper echelons of the FAZ were dismissed, and Mobutu appointed General Singa as the new chief of staff (*auditeur général* in FAZ terminology). The performance of the FAZ was appalling. Again, after the purges of 1975, when 78 officers had been killed or dismissed,[97] 28 commanding officers were sent into retirement, others were dismissed without purse. The FAZ's main 'contribution' was in violently subduing public, even patriotic, protests of Zaïrian citizens, which erupted as a result of what was felt to be the humiliating performance of their own armed forces.[98]

Even before the next attack on Katanga and the Shaba II war, which started on 13 May 1978, President Mobutu had further weakened the armed forces by purging, and even killing, 250 of the best trained officers for allegedly attempting a *coup d'état*. The FAZ was then unable to stop ten invading

95 One Congolese officer who took part in the operation insisted that the Moroccans did not do much of the fighting. This view is partly supported by a former Belgian officer who was at the frontline most of the campaign, interviews (anonymised) in Kinshasa and Brussels, 2011

96 Testimony Be 6 of Belgian colonel de cavalerie blindée responsible for the operation, Fernand Pettiaux

97 700 NCOs had already been dismissed, in the wake of the so-called Conspiration de 1975, or coup monté et manqé, which was simulated by Mobutu and his inner circle around General Singa, Wondo-Omanyundu, Jean Jacques (2013), Les Armées au Congo-Kinshasa Radioscopie de la Force Publique aux FARDC, Editions Monde Nouveau, Saint-Légier, pp.84ff, see also Schatzberg (1988), p.108

98 Keegan, John (1979), World Armies, Facts on File, New York, pp. 822–823

battalions. Katangan Gendarmes (self-styled 'Tigers') met little organised resistance, with only one company of the 142nd battalion of the famous Division Kamaniola trying to defend Kolwezi; the rest was an utter rout. A thousand invaders took Kolwezi on just day two of the campaign. Widespread looting and killing triggered a French sortie by the 2nd REP (*régiment étranger parachutiste*) to Kolwezi, to both evacuate expatriates and stabilise the front line. It is believed by several contemporary witnesses[99] that Mobutu himself had ordered the looting of foreign possessions during the retreat in order to provoke a military reaction from a European country, most of which displayed little enthusiasm to get involved into another operation in Katanga. When Mobutu's (foreign) advisors requested that he open a second front east of Kolwezi operated by his forces, he agreed but never deployed any units.[100]

In Shaba II again it was Belgian and French paratroopers, transported by the US Air Force, which secured victory for the Congo.[101] The French forces deployed in Kolwezi reported widespread lawlessness. They found it difficult to distinguish who the plunderers on the ground were, some of whom turned out to be FAZ officers, some were civilian opportunists, and some Katangan 'Tigers'.[102] After this so-called 'Six Days War' French forces pulled out, and Belgian *regiment para-commado* secured Kamina and Lubumbashi for the Kinshasa government, until a *Force d'intervention interafricaine* (FIA) was deployed to fulfil what should have been the task of the FAZ. The African force included a Moroccan task force of 1455 men, a company each from Gabon, Senegal, and Ivory Coast, plus 310 Togolese soldiers. Congo's southern

99 Oberst Valentin (Germ), interview Co 11 Kinshasa July 2011, Be 1 Col Lambert (Belg), interview Brussels, Co 4 Gen Mutobu (Congo), interview Brussels, see also Nzongola-Ntalaja (2003), p.161

100 Testimony of Belgian and Congolese officer veterans, Kinshasa, Brussels 2011

101 The increased US interest in the Congo derived from the assumed necessity to contain Cuban influence from and in Angola.

102 Erulin, Philippe (1979), Zaïre: Sauver Kolwezi, Édition Montbel, Paris, np

boundaries with Angola and Zambia were guarded for another year by Moroccan, Senegalese and Gabonese soldiers.

To replace the FIA by national forces, another Congolese *ad hoc* brigade had to be set up, the 21st infantry brigade. In 1979 North Korean military technical assistants, who had trained the Division Kamaniola (which never surpassed the strength of a brigade), were expelled from the Congo, and Belgian military cooperation increased again from 60 to 110 officers, who then created the 21st brigade, based at Kitona.

In 1980, in a rare move to strengthen the army – Mobutu may have realised that he had gone too far in weakening it – a 'presidential staff' parallel to the general staff at the presidency was set up, and the military reorganised into eight military regions, each of them with operational responsibility. However, there was no coordination across the regions, each of which was commanded by the respective regional general staff.[103] In addition, the young National Police and the gendarmerie (leftovers of the former FP TSTs) were merged into the *Gendarmerie Nationale* (GN), a force officially controlled by the general staff of the land forces (*Etat-major de l'armée de terre*) but factually only available at the personal order of the president. Theoretically the FAZ was 52,000 plus 8,000 GN, but it remained without large units with combined task capacities, like artillery support, engineers, logistics, or communications. Instead of developing the whole spectrum of a functional military body, there was an inflation of Special Forces, paratroopers, and commando units. After 1973 Zaïre had eight parachute battalions, five commando battalions (in most modern armies those are counted as companies), and even a *battalion voltigeur* (air acrobatics) at the 7th military region at Boma. Thus, Special Forces, including the Presidential Guard

103 Military regions included the 1st region Shaba, 2nd Bas-Zaïre, 3rd Haut-Zaïre, 4th Kivu, 5th Babundu, 6th Kasai, 7th Equateur, and 8th Kinshasa

battalions (GP) and the battalion *Escorte Présidentielle* accounted for an unusual high proportion of command units compared to 22 battalions of conventional infantry.[104] With this restructuring after the Shaba wars, the Congolese military became an army *à plusieurs vitesses* with some units well-equipped and others falling into neglect. The few fortunate ones were meant to be elite units, detached from one another and placed under the control of foreign officers. The FAZ's available heavy weaponry was never operational, be this Mirage fighter bombers or outdated Chinese main battle tanks.[105] The purchase of expensive weapon systems was as much driven by a quest for decorum and prestige as the 'white elephant' steelworks and huge dams in the civilian realm. The bulk of the FAZ personnel, described as a 'phantom army' by Ebenga/N'dalu, were left on their own. Officers and the rank and file alike lived off the people, from petty crime and corruption.[106]

After the Shaba wars the land forces consisted of 23,300 men, a size they would keep through the 1980s. This included a staff of nominally 4,400 (état-major at Kinshasa and eight regional staffs); some 1,900 personnel at the five military schools, including teachers and students;[107] a 1,500 strong Navy, and 2,500 personnel Air Force – equipped with a single operational Lockheed C-130. Men under arms included the 31st airborne brigade (4,000) garrisoned in Kinshasa, Kamina and Goma; the 1st armoured brigade (1,500) in Mbanza-Ngungu, which could never provide more than one squadron of five tanks; the 21st infantry brigade of three battalions in Lubumbashi, Likasi and Kolwezi, which soon went down from 3,500 to 450 soldiers; the 41st brigade *commando*

104 The German Bundeswehr of 220,000 personnel has only three paratrooper battalions.

105 The T59 and T62 were a 1973 gift from China. According to one testimony, they were only used for the parade on independence day, 'consuming more oil than diesel'; interview (anonymised) former Belgian technical assistant, Brussels, November 2011

106 Ebenga and N'Landu (2005), p.69

107 Ecole d'Infanterie, and Ecole d'Artillerie at Kitona, Ecole des troupes blindées (tank school) at Nbanza-Ngungu, paratrooper and commando training at camps Kotakoli and Ndjili

in Kisangani (2,000 men); the 1,500 strong 13th infantry brigade in Kalemie, consisting of aging soldiers who actually should have retired, but could not leave because of the lack of pension plans; and finally the 'Division Kamaniola' with its staff in Kolwezi, and its three brigades totalling a mere 3,000 men, scattered all over Katanga.

Training, equipment and sometimes direct leadership for the various branches of the Congolese armed forces came from a broad range of ever shifting sources, with a few constants. The 31st airborne brigade, the so-called *Bérets Rouges*, was trained by 60 French officers (until 1990),[108] led by a French colonel; and every Congolese officer and NCO down to the platoon level, had a French *parrain* (godfather) who was actually in charge, including for the payment of salaries.[109] The 21st infantry brigade, the *Bérets Verts*, was trained and organised by the Belgian military until 1990. The 41st brigade *commando,* initially supposed to be equipped and instructed by 70 Chinese advisors, was eventually handed over to Belgian cooperation.[110] The Navy at Matadi was trained by the North Korean military, which eventually destroyed all of the boat engines before they were expelled in 1991. The consequence of this multifarious engagement was twofold: first, there was very limited national control over the armed forces and, second, there was no military cohesion among the units, little communication and little interoperability.

According to Belgian estimates, between 1979 and 1984 the strength of the FAZ had actually fluctuated between 29,000 personnel and 23,000. No FAZ units ever reached more than half of their nominal strength; none of them had sufficient rolling stock. For example, one retired general told this author that for the entire military region he commanded in 1982, a territory of the size

108 The brigade was dissolved in 1993 for suspected plans of pursuing a *coup d'état*

109 See Callaghy, Thomas M (1984), The State-Society Struggle: Zaire in Comparative Perspective, Columbia University Press, New York

110 United Nations (1997), *Zaire IRIN Briefing*, 2, 27, np

of Belgium, there was one single functional truck available to the military, and the gendarmerie had to patrol the territory with a single Jeep!

The *Corps Logistique* (CORLOG) of the FAZ was concentrated in Kinshasa. About 3,000 nominal personnel included a command section, a logistics training centre, one transport battalion, one battalion for ammunition storage, and another one to oversee the empty depots. In 1979 15 Belgian technical assistants were sent to overhaul the logistical sector, and they organised a re-distribution of arms, so that there would be only one kind of rifle with each battalion. One could then begin to stock fitting ammunition closer to the respective battalions, keeping in mind that with every displacement the entire depot would have to follow suit. Still, with every unit carrying another assortment of arms, incompatible with other units, a centralised organisation of supply was unserviceable.

Separately from the FAZ a presidential escort and a 4,600 strong special unit, the *brigade* (later *division) spéciale présidentielle* (DSP), existed. It was commanded by Mobutu's nephew Etienne Nzimbi. Originally well-equipped (they were the only unit with recoilless 106mm guns), the DSP saw its conditions deteriorate as it was gradually expanded to a strength of two command brigades of 7,500 men each, without its gear keeping pace with the rising numbers. This guard, consecutively trained by officers from Israel, Egypt, and North Korea, was not part of the chain of command of the land forces but reported directly to the President. In 1994 Mobutu even deployed this force abroad to fight in the Rwandan civil war in support of the incumbent Habyarimana.[111] The elite of the Special Forces was formed by yet another

111 See Robinson, Colin (2012), *Army Reconstruction in the Democratic Republic of the Congo 2003–2009*, Small Wars and Insurgencies, 23, 3, 474-499

independent 'Dragon' battalion for especially sensitive operations.[112] Another unit created by Mobutu, and trained by the United States, was his 1,500 to 2.000 strong *Service d'Action et de Renseignement Militaires* (SARM), for years led by General Bolozi, the president's brother-in-law.

The Gendarmerie, counting some 25,000 personnel, was spread out over eleven different circumscriptions, each further subdivided along the colonial FP pattern into one *bataillon territorial* and one *bataillon mobile* respectively. Its situation deteriorated quickly when it was financially abandoned to the benefit of the new *Garde Civile* in 1984.[113]

In 1981 it was decided at the suggestion of Western advisors that the *armée de terre* would need an official budget. Two French and two Belgian officers were commissioned to do this work, which was supposed to be finished by 1983. However, an official budget for the armed forces was never implemented.[114] Without such a budget, the military had to live from day to day on whatever funding was 'miraculously' released from the presidential palace.[115] As a means of damage limitation a mechanism was temporarily introduced to insure that all soldiers and their families would have at least one meal per day: this *Direction des oeuvres sociales militaires* was created, following the design of a similar FP structure, which was called 'Promivil'.[116] The eventual abandonment of this structure after the initial funding run out was a major source of discontent and corruption at the lower echolons of the FAZ. In 1983 a Belgian-led audit of the Congolese army concluded that the effective

112 They were also called the Hiboux (Eagle owl) because they preferably killed people at night.

113 By devree 84-036 of 28 August, Nlandu Mayamna, Thierry (2012), Mapping Police Services in the Democratic Republic of Congo: Central, Provincial, and Local Levels, Institute of Delevopment Studies, Brighton, pp.24f

114 Documents provided by a former head of Belgian Congolese military cooperation

115 Wording chosen by former head of the Zairian Officers school, EFO, interview Be 1 October 2011, Brussels

116 Kabasu, Katulondi (2010), Joseph Kabila: la Reconstruction Réinventrice du Congo, L'Harmattan, Paris, p.78

force consisted of a fraction of the nominal FAZ.[117] It revealed that at least ten per cent of the personnel was 'ghost-soldiers', and that one could count at best on the 31st, the 21st, and to some degree the 41st brigades for military tasks.

After 1984 it was decided to concentrate military cooperation on officer training. The foreign logistic specialists were replaced by staff officers, and 80 per cent of funding went to the newly founded *Ecole de Formation des Officiers* (EFO). However, the EFO would always remain under the command of a Belgian colonel, even when it was transformed into a military academy in 1987. The initial aim to raise the value of degrees from this academy to a university BA (license) grade was never achieved.[118] Further plans for an *Ecole supérieure d'état-major* and an *Ecole d'administrateurs militaires* were not implemented for lack of funding.[119] In terms of national ownership of military know-how this is unmistakeably at odds with the aim to create an intellectually and professionally autonomous army.

1.8 The Façade Collapses

Due to the culture of *la debrouille* the 'loyalty' of Congolese soldiers remained to the one individual who fed them, and already in 1988 the military were reported by Michael Schatzberg as working for example as private guns for those willing to pay.[120] The negative effect of the long term neglect on the FAZ became obvious through the two big pillages of capital and country, one in 1991, and another one over January and February 1993. The former started as a limited bogus mutiny but quickly evolved beyond control; the latter was provoked by the issuing of a five million Zaire banknote to pay the soldiers'

117 Document courtesy of Colonel Lambert
118 Be 1 former commander EFO Brussels
119 The Belgian officers at the EFO finally left the DRC in 1990, when cooperation was folded for the rest of Mobutu's rule
120 Schatzberg (1988)

guerdon. The whole scale of bankruptcy became evident once foreign aid stalled and fell 'from US$898 million in 1990 to less than US$200 million in 1993.[121] The looting of Kinshasa in late September 1991 could only be contained by French and Belgian support at Mobutu's urgent request to the two countries, but they still had 'scared off what remained of expatriate staff', and the rest of any existing economy, which was already working under precarious conditions, evaporated.[122] French operation *Baumier* and Belgian Operation *Blue Beam* included in total 2000 troops mostly from the French 21st RIMA, a regiment of French marines, and the 2nd regiment of the Foreign Legion Infantry. Belgium contributed about 1000 troops, a majority coming from the *Régiment Para-Commando*.[123] The regime had once again survived despite of and largely against its own soldiers. The 1993 lootings were worse and extended throughout the country. According to contemporary French and Belgian observers the riot was a planned event that went out of control, when Mobutu tried to eradicate oppositional politicians under cover of a limited turmoil. The French ambassador, Phillip Bernard, had facilitated the escape of one of them, Etienne Tshisekedi, and was shot the same day by 'a stray bullet'. French military cooperation was immediately halted, and advisors withdrawn. The FAZ was left with some Chinese and Israeli military advisors.

In sum, it appears that the 'Golden Age' of Zaire and the Congolese armed forces was neither better nor worse than any other sequence of its existence. This author asked six supreme command officers of the FARDC, who all had begun their career in the ANC or the FAZ, and who had all

121 Development aid eventually dropped to US$126 million in 1996

122 Trefon, Theodore (2004), Reinventing Order in Congo: How People Respond to State Failure in Kinshasa, Zed Books, London p.73; one Belgian former Kinshasa entrepreneur, who had migrated to Gabon, told this author that he did not expect a second looting. Everyone believed that the deepest point in history would have been 1991. After 1993, however, everything seemed to be possible except a reestablishment of a business, interview (anonymised) Libreville, March 2009

123 Cooper, Tom and Pit Weinert (2003), *Zaire/DR Congo since 1980*, Central, Eastern, & Southern Africa Database,

received classical European staff training in the 1970s and 1980s, how they would assess the quality of professionalism and coherency of Mobutu's 'army' and its successor. They were asked independently to give grades according to the French school system, which gives zero for complete failure, and a mark of 'twenty' for an optimal result. [124] The sobering result was that they on average allocated a mere ten points for the FAZ, with no better mark for the 'Golden Age' of the Congolese military. According to their assessment, at no other point in their history did the Congolese armed forces reach this level.[125]

Any success in military operations, training, advancement in equipment, standardisation, organisation, or doctrine was due to an intentionally scattered and non-coherent foreign support. In that context, the pretention of a national security policy based on non-alignment only served as a tool to atomise the FAZ. Training of the armed forces was performed at best at the tactical level, which left the country with a large number of capable uniformed warriors, but no working chain of command or equipment to employ or deploy them.[126] Indeed, at the operational level, and even more at the strategic level, skills acquired via external support – often even abroad – were eroded by neglect or indirect intent *dolus eventualis*, by side-lining trained officers, or their physical elimination. The Mobutu personal regime successfully stemmed the development of a national army in the form of a coherent military body, bound by undivided loyalty to a state or constitution. In the early 1990s 'rather than serving as an instrument for the state, the army had become a loose cannon', difficult to control, and at times even an active participant in local

124 For a contemporary external evaluation of the FAZ see Mathews, Lloyd (1983), *Zaire*, in Keegan, John, World Armys, Macmillan, London, who concludes that the FAZ is no regular army in the conventional Western sense

125 The marks reached by the different forces were on average: FP 15/20, FP/ANC 10/20, FAZ 10/20, FAC nil/20, FARDC 5/20

126 Assessment of former German military attaché to Kinshasa, Kinshasa, 2010

insurrections.[127] From 1991 to 1993, *débrouillardise*, corruption, and institutional failure quickly metastasized from one sector to another, reducing the Zairian quasi-state to utter impotence. In Mobutu's own assessment the FAZ was a 'conglomérat des commerçants et affairistes en tenues militaires'.[128] Having shaped this officer corps he was well aware of the actual function of his dozens of generals.

Although ostensibly aimed at the construction of a true army, its restructuring as it was employed achieved actually the opposite result. It bore fruit in two ways, firstly it barred the instigation of a proper military, and secondly, it prevented the inception of a strengthened, institutionalised state. The political consequence was the solidification of the position of president Mobutu's personal rule regime.[129]

1.9 The First and Second Congo Wars

The start of what would later be called the First Congo War may represent the most tragic event to those Congolese longing for the creation of a viable state. According to Georges Nzongola, the *Alliance des Forces Démocratique pour la Libération du Congo-Zaïre* (AFDL)[130] invasion under Laurent Kabila aborted an initiated transition to democracy and institutionalisation, which could no longer be kept at bay: a political bargaining for power had been put on its way with the establishment of a National Constitutional Conference (CNS) in 1990.[131] Mobutu had been shocked into

127 Lemarchand (2008), p.220

128 'Conglomerate of merchants and dealers in military outfit' (this author's translation), often cited without reference, Mobutu is said to have addressed his officers 'mes généraux affairistes et commerçants' when they traded arms against Jonas Savimbi's diamonds

129 Already in 1981 a tendency to 'Zairian Absolutism' was described by Harms, Robert W (1981), River of Wealth, River of Sorrow, Yale University Press, New Haven

130 The AFDL itself was a fusion of four groups: the Alliance Démocratique des Peuples (ADP), mostly Zairian tutsi, the Parti de la Révolution Populaire (PRP) and its military wing, the Forces Armées Populaires (FAP), the Conseil National de la Résistance pour la Démocratie (CNRD), and the Mouvement Révolutionnaire pour la Libération du Zaïre (MRLZ)

131 Conférence nationale souveraine; compared to other national conferences with 105 days the Congolese was the longest, the biggest with 1100 delegates, and the most expensive

granting this conference by images of the Romanian dictator Nikolaou Ceausescu's execution, but he dismissed the CNS again only 18 month later, when he had regained enough confidence in his power, and had managed to re-incorporate disobedient politicians within his clientèle.

The reason why Mobuto could hold claims for more freedom at bay, and thus once more bar the creation of a state, is twofold. Firstly it lies in the political culture of opposition leaders to whom 'democracy' signified a mere instrument to access personal power – in other words, to become the 'caliph at the caliph's place'. Secondly it was based on the soldiers' readiness – during the period between two major mutinies – to subdue oppositional demonstrations that were demanding the reopening of the CNS.[132]

In truth, the CNS was no more than an instrument of an ethnically driven intra-elite power contest, itself exploiting existing tensions within the population. The national conference itself actually added to some older grievances. Among others, it had barred many Congolese Hutu and Tutsi delegates from attending, contributing much to the problems that still haunt Eastern Congo.[133] As the end of Mobutu, consumed by cancer, was coming near, the country fell into a free for all power grab.

The First Congo War, from 11 October 1996 to 17 May 1997, brought down the regime of Joseph Mobutu. On this occasion the FAZ was again exposed as of little military use. Hard hit when the AFDL, a group once more officially led by the old hand Laurent Désiré Kabila but actually being carried to victory by Rwanda and Uganda, had no difficulty vanquishing the merely

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one, costing two billion Francs CFA. It was the scene of a difficult list of past crimes, of a regulation of accounts, and tribal revenge, see for example Lemaire, Luc (2012), Conférence nationale souveraine… Vous avez dit "souveraine"?, A la Une, np, for a different view see Nzongola-Ntalaja, Georges (2006), *The History of Democracy in DR Congo*, Soundings, 14, Autumn, 131-145

132 Turner (2007), p.37

133 Stearns, Jason (2012), From CNDP to M23, The Evolution of an Armed Movement in Eastern Congo, Rift Valley Institute, Nairobi, p.12

figurative FAZ. Little fighting occurred because the fleeing FAZ was faster than the advancing enemy, confirming its demise after that of the dictator.[134] Those of its elements that did not desert fast were incarcerated in a concentration camp at the former military base Kitona, South West of Kinshasa. One officer detained there for about six months told this author that 'there were 46,000 of us in the beginning. The conditions were terrible. Every day we collected the dead. At liberation there were about 36,000 men left'.[135] These dead were due to starvation and in part to disease; even if for the 1996 proportion of Congolese active military that perished from AIDS are given as 36 per cent.[136]

After the AFDL victory, newly liberated POWs and other former FAZ military were recruited into the new army of the Republic, the *Forces armées congolaises* (FAC), which represented a conglomerate of rebel makeshift units including the AFDL and Laurent Kabila's child soldiers, the so-called *kadogos.*[137] We recognise here a pattern that carries through Congolese military history: as in the case of the colonial FP, the ANC in the 1960s Congo crises, rebellions and secessions, and the 1970s deserters and enemies of the Shaba wars, any former enemy combatant, rebel, or disobedient soldier was to be integrated in the respective official regular forces. Disciplinary consequences for disobedience were not addressed, and the individual soldiers developed a sense of impunity.

The new organisation that claimed from 1997 onward to be the army of the Republic, the FAC, mainly served as an instrument in the new President's quest for power. As it was in Mobutu's era, political and military power in Kinshasa 'lay less in the official institutions of state than in the persona of the

134 Turner (2007)

135 Interview with FARDC colonel VI, Sept 2011

136 Meinken, Arno (2005), Militärische Kapazitäten und Fähigkeiten afrikanischer Staaten. Ursachen und Wirkungen militärischer Ineffektivität in Sub-Sahara Afrika, Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, Berlin, p.27

137 Child soldiers personally loyal to Kabila's lieutenant Masasu Nindaga, who was executed in 2000

president and his informal networks'.[138] Once securely in power Laurent Kabila's forgot to honour the political demands from the Ugandan and Rwandan allies who had carried him to victory. Hence, in August 1998, the *Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie* (RCD), a proxy force similar to the ex-AFDL, was launched to unseat the leader in Kinshasa. As a reaction, troops loyal to the President rounded up Tutsi civilians and soldiers in cities around the country and summarily executed them; Stearns reported, 'This included around a hundred men at the Kamina military camp in Katanga province, [and] eighty in the Kananga camp in Kasai-Occidental.'[139]

During the ensuing second Congo War, the so-called 'African Great War' from 1998 to 2003, the former rebels of the first Congo War, now rebranded the national army, did not have any military education except for their little experience as factual auxiliaries of Uganda and Rwanda. Poorly trained and fed, the unpaid kadogo elements of the FAC bore the lion's share of casualties by fighting, first, against Rwandan elite units in Katanga and later against the RCD.[140] In that war the official victor of the first Congo War, the new FAC of Laurent Kabila, was never considered by anyone as a serious army to be reckoned with. It was the military from Angola, Zimbabwe and Chad that saved Kinshasa from renewed conquest, protection that the Congolese government had to pay for in terms of licences given to its foreign protectors to exploit the natural resources of the country at will. In retrospective, René Lemarchand described the FAC as 'a metaphor for the appalling inefficiency of the Congolese army [and] synonym for further unrest'.[141] Insurgencies, militias, home defence groups, and organised crime had mushroomed during the

138 Stearns (2012), p.16

139 Ibid. pp.15f, see also ICG (2005), *The Congo's Transition is Failing: Crisis in the Kivus*, Africa Report, No 91

140 See Shearer, David (2007), *Africa's Great War*, Survival, 41, 2, 89-106

141 Lemarchand (2008), p.240f

period in which the central government had so little control over the entirety of its territory.

Quickly losing credit both with Western donors, who had little use left for undemocratic leaders after the fall of the Berlin Wall, and with his clients, who felt entitled to the positions formerly occupied by the entourage of Mobutu Sese Seko, Laurent Kabila soon found his support fading on all fronts. His assassination by his bodyguard on 16 January 2001 cleared the way for a new round in the open battle for power in Congo.

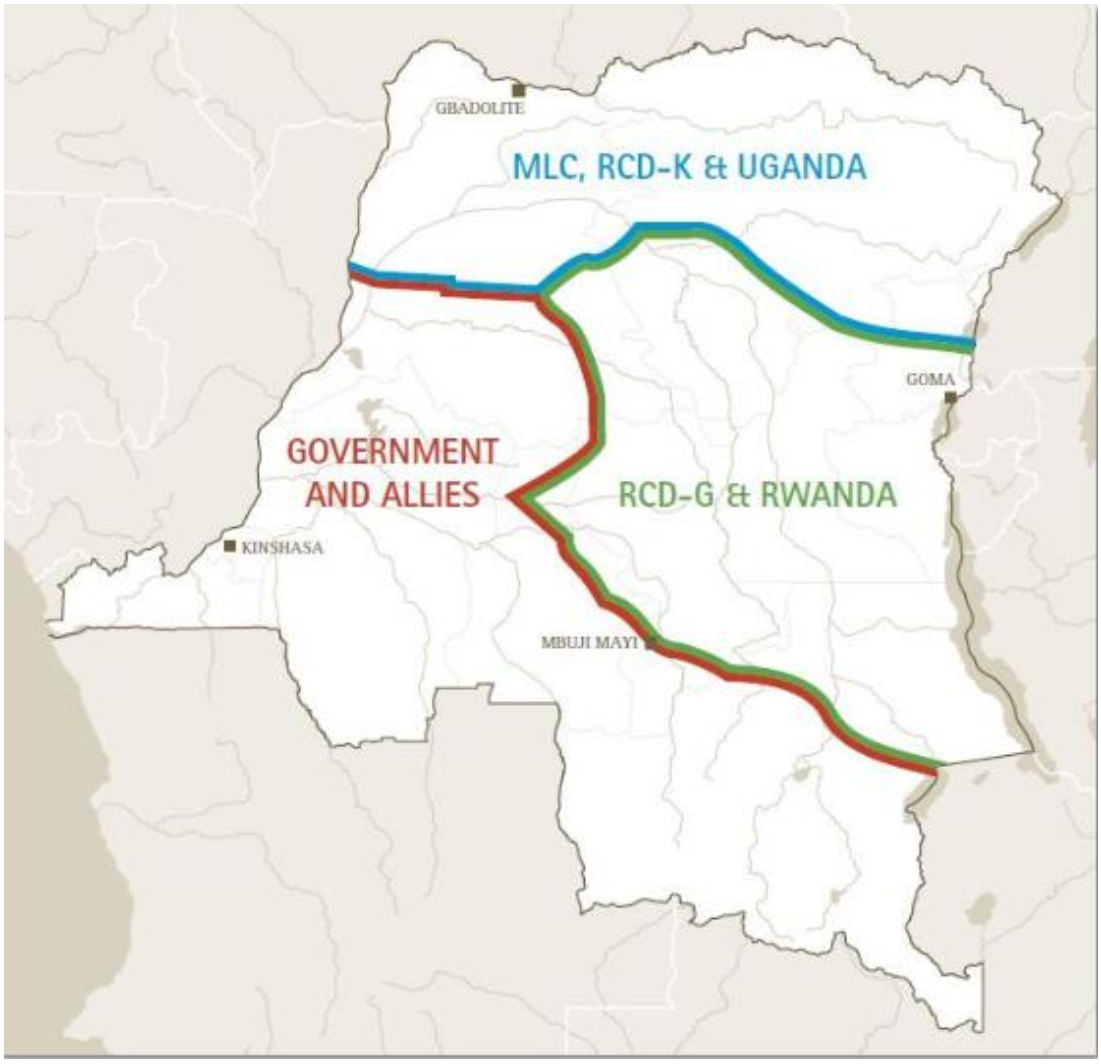

Table 4: Map of Congo in the early 2000s

On 31 July 1999 the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement to end the war in Congo had been signed by six heads of state, but not implemented except for

the launch of the MONUC peacekeeping operation in November 1999.[142] Importantly it moved the game from the battlefield to the negotiation table. After the assassination of President Laurent Kabila, peace was given another chance, in the context of a peace contract that invested his son, Joseph, as president with strong Western support and included all warring parties on the Congolese territory.

By the end of 2002 the all-Inclusive Agreement between Kinshasa, now led by Joseph Kabila, was agreed with the RDC, the *Mouvement de Libération du Congo* (MLC), the *Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie/Mouvement de Libération* (RCD/ML), the *Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie/ National* (RCD/N), diverse Maï-Maï organisations, the political opposition, and civil society (*les Forces vives*). State and security institutions building were to be forcefully pursued by the Congolese transitional authorities – with a key milestone set by the national elections in 2006 – and by the international community expected to provide major financial and technical support to this effort. Among others, the parties committed to engage in a process of formation of a newly restructured and integrated national army.[143]

However, similar to the non-application of the constitution, which was not employed during two presidential terms, effective military-bureaucratic reform towards an institutionalisation and professionalization of the FARDC was not implemented in earnest. Following the examples of military micro-management of his predecessors Joseph Mobutu (during the Shaba wars), and Laurent Kabila (during the Second Congo War), Joseph Kabila interfered between 2008 and 2009 heavily in commanding campaigns in the Eastern provinces.

142 See UNSC resolution 1279, Mission des *Nations Unies en République démocratique du Congo*

143 See *Accord global et inclusif sur la transition en République Démocratique du Congo*, document available at www.grandslacs.net/doc/2826.pdf

Not only did he command brigades directly via satellite phone, in the course paralysing the general staff, but he even 'directed individual battalion commanders in some cases, making a mockery of the chain of command'.[144] During January 2009, the chief of defence staff and key operations staff were only made aware of Ugandan and Rwandan movements into the country the day they crossed the borders.[145] Under Congolese politico-cultural conditions parties are mere instruments of patronage adapted to the rhetoric of modernisation towards democracy acceptable to foreign onlookers. Even less than in other African regions, power in Central Africa 'cannot easily be divided or shared' – a usually implicit understanding and assumption that is nicely captured in the Zairian/Congolese cultural axiom, '*Le pouvoir se mange entier*'.[146] Nowhere is this principle more relevant than in the government's security related policy, as demonstrated by the example of Kabila's *Garde Républicaine* (GR). Like Mobutu with his Special Presidential Division, Kabila the younger relies on an Angolan trained GR of 12,000 privileged fighters 'without bothering with the national army's chain of command'.[147]

1.10 The Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo

The foundation of the FARDC was part of the peace process that led to the transitional constitution. In November 2004 a preliminary law (*loi* 04/023) on the organisation of the armed forces was adopted, and with article 191 of the 2006 constitution the FARDC was finally legally established. Only on 11 August 2011, however, was the *loi organique portant organisation et foncionnement des forces armées*, which defines in detail the place and role of

144 Robinson (2012), p.480

145 Ibid. p.493

146 'Power is eaten whole', Foucher, Vincent (2009), *Difficiles successions en Afrique subsaharienne: persistance et reconstruction du pouvoir personnel*, Pouvoirs, 129, 127-137

147 Trefon, Theodore (2011), Congo Masquerade, Zed Books, London, p.66; the GR recruits only from the Katanga and Eastern Tutsi communities, interview GR member Kinshasa 2011; a strength of 12,000 is the first confirmed number for the GR from an insider

the army, ratified by Parliament and signed by the director of the cabinet of the president. According to the law the FARDC is a professional, republican, national, non-political (*apolitique*) army of development (*armée de développement*).[148]

In line with the all-inclusive peace agreement signed in Pretoria in December 2002, the FARDC was a joint project of the former belligerents. The highest positions in the new army were at the time allocated among them as follows: the FAC provided the chief of staff, and the recently notorious General John Numbi temporarily became the commander of the small air force.[149] The MLC would command the navy, and RCD-Goma would lead the general staff of the *Armée de terre*, the land forces. As part of the peace agreement power-sharing formula, former rebel groups were allotted positions in key institutions that they could fill with competent people. This term did not mean people endowed with high soldier's ethics, however. Stearns and Borello highlight the cases of Generals Gabriel Amisi, alias 'Tango Fort', and Mustafa Mukiza. The former, an ex-RCD commander responsible for the May 2002 Kisangani massacre of civilians, became head of Congo's land forces. The latter, a commander of Jean Paul Bemba's MLC militia and thus responsible for the 2002 massacres and mass rapes in the Central African Republic,[150] became commander of the important Kitona military base, later to take command of the first military region.

148 République Démocratique du Congo (2011), Présidence de la République, Kinshasa, titre premier, para. 9, 10, 12, 12, 24

149 As general inspector of the national police Numbi commanded an excessively violent overthrow of the unarmed opposition in Bas Congo by his heavily armed 600 rapid intervention police, interview with technical assistant (anonymised) to DRC police reform, Paris, 2011. A later apparent involvement in the murder of the human rights activist Floribert Chebeya stalled Numbi's career

150 General Amisi was arrested for corruption after the failure of the FARDC to defend Goma against the M23 mutiny. He had reportedly sold weapons to Eastern Congolese armed groups

In 2003 a Presidential Decree established the National Commission for Demobilisation and Reinsertion (CONADER) which opened yet another drive to incorporate as many people into the army as possible, including warlords, criminals, and mutineers. Impunity for committed atrocities, desertions, and war crimes was the main common denominator of the units that would form the new army. All ex-combatants, whether on the territory of the DRC or abroad at the cessation of hostilities, were to become officially part of the FARDC. At the end of the fighting the belligerents had declared a total of 340,000 combatants.[151] Half of these, 170,000, were reported as former FAC. All RCD factions and MLC together counted for 27 per cent; Maï-Maï and other armed groups 21 per cent, and 'fighters abroad' two per cent.[152]

By 2004 the future army was planned to consist of four divisions of *forces territoriales* or *forces de couverture* of 12,000 men each, garrisoned in the hinterland where they were supposed to represent the strategic reserve; 18 regiments totalling 56,000 troops as *force principale de défense*, the active defence; and 6,000 *forces de réaction rapide*. The process was to be completed in 2015. By 2008 the Minister of Defence, Chikez Diemu announced new targets: the creation a Rapid Reaction Force of 12 battalions was to be completed by 2010; territorial reserves as the principal force should be available in 2015, a process that would be completed by 2020.[153]

Throughout the transitional period and the first term of President Kabila, progress in army integration was slow, and one cannot speak of the installation of a legitimate monopoly on violence by the state. Former belligerents turned politicians kept their private militias well into 2006: Vice-

151 Numbers given by Congolese officer involved in the creation of new units

152 The combatants à l'étranger was Mobutu's presidential guard, of which large proportions had fled to Brazzaville, data received from Congolese senior officer

153 Speech of the minister at SSR workshop in Kinshasa, Report on the DRC SSR Roundtable talks Kinshasa, 25-26 February 2008. A count in 2012 gives 18 integrated brigades, some of them having meanwhile left the FARDC

President Ruberwa of the RCD-Goma and vice-president Bemba of the MLC even had strong forces in downtown Kinshasa.[154] President J. Kabila's guard remained a military body parallel to the regular armed forces; in addition, independent armed groups up to brigade strength, like the FDLR, continued populating the Eastern provinces, benefiting heavily from illicit trade in natural resources.[155] Congolese 'civil defence' Maï-Maï militias in the area received protection from the regular armed forces while at the same time they work directly with armed groups, whose original *raison d'être* was actually long forgotten.

In such an environment beyond Kinshasa's control Congolese army officers as high as the Deputy Army Commander blended into the economic and social structure of the regions in which they are present. In an opportunistic move they exploited their military power for personal benefit, and at the expense of wider society. Self-enrichment activities not only comprised, and continue to do so, classic racketeering at historical FP or FAZ levels, but some of them even 'personally control[ed] whole mines'.[156] A 2008 MONUC report noticed that the Bisiye casserite mine in North Kivu was under the full control of the 'top brass of pro-Kinshasa military', RCD-Goma and Maï-Maï. The three parties shared the profits instead of fighting each other.[157] Hans Hoebeke and Henry Boshoff have given another example of this level of corruption in the armed forces with the FARDC 85th brigade, concluding that it was obviously not in the interest of certain FARDC commanders to end the

154 Antipas Mbusa Nyamwisi, a leader of RCD-ML (Nande people, supported by Uganda and controlled the Grand Nord of Kivu) which had split from RCD-Goma (Rwandophone, supported by Rwanda and controlled the Petit Nord) became minister of foreign affairs

155 Nzongola-Ntalaja (2006), np

156 Prendergast, John, et al. (2011), Why a Certification Process for Conflict Minerals is Urgent, Enough Project, Washington DC, p.3

157 Johnson, Dominic and Aloys Tegera (2005), Digging Deeper: How the DR Congo's Mining Policy is Failing the Country, Pole Institute, Goma, p.32

conflict as long as their units were able profit from mining areas.[158] The phenomenon is actually hugely widespread, with a UN report speaking of 'criminal networks of the armed forces' trading gold, tantalum ore, and other commodities, exported via Burundi, Uganda, and Rwanda. In addition, everyday illegal taxing of the population through FARDC soldiers at roadblocks is ubiquitous.[159]

Taking up arms has in many cases been the ultimate means to get a foothold in the corridors of power and wealth. The career of one general is exemplary: Laurent Nkunda was proposed by the RCD-Goma, of which he had commanded the 7th brigade, to help lead the unified army in 2003, and the national military leadership accepted his nomination. Although he did not take up the post, the message had been sent that the authors of war crimes, such as he accused of, would not actually be punished but rewarded with important and profitable positions.[160] Both Nkunda and his successor Bosco 'Terminator' Ntaganda were during their command involved in illicit gold smuggling;[161] other non-regular military including Maï-Maï Yakutumba and Raia Mutomboki were and are benefiting from the unruly situation;[162] mines in Walikale, particularly rich in tin, Tantalum, and gold, are almost exclusively under the control of armed groups, including the FDLR, the Maï-Maï Cheka, and FARDC

158 Hoebeke, Hans, et al. (2009), *"Monsieur le Président, vous n'avez pas d'armée…" La Réforme du secteur de sécurité vue du Kivu*, Cahiers Africains, 76, 119-137, p.126

159 Natalegawa, Marty M (2008), Final report of the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Security Council Report, S/2008/773, p.32

160 Turner (2007), p.101

161 At one occasion Ntagnda's guards had a shootout with presidential guards at Goma airport, after 300 kilo of Gold was loaded on a private American Cessna, and the guards demanded their share of the six million dollar profit, Gouby, Mélanie (2011), *A Curious Case of Congo Gold* Radio Netherlands Worldwide, np

162 Raia Mutomboki means 'outraged citizens' in local Swahili; it is considered by the UN Joint Human Rights Office as a xenophobic organisation with a record of arbitrary killing of civilians. There are also the Maï-Maï Nyakiliba, Maï-Maï Fujo, Kirikicho, Kifuafua in North, and the Maï-Maï La Fontaine, and the Maï-Maï Yakutumba, Nyatura, and Mudundu in South Kivu. They were created as local self-defence units but soon joined in the disorderly power structure in the DRC; OHCHR (2012), Mass arbitrary execution of civilians, including dozens of children, in Southern Masisi, Eastern DRC, Geneva

units.[163] Between them commanders of such armed groups have become business partners, earning millions of dollars. However, this huge joint commercial enterprise, which some Congolese have unofficially dubbed 'Walikale Incorporated,' is for the most part overseen by regular Congolese officers. The United Nations reported that in 2010 it had received credible evidence that an entire sector of the 'FARDC criminal networks' […]

> was created for the explicit purpose of benefiting from the mineral trade. Its deployment follows the outlines of one of the Province's main cassiterite [tin ore] and gold zones.[164]

Not only former rebels integrated into the FARDC, but also former FAZ personnel took advantage of the lawlessness in the country; reports of officers and soldiers involved in contraband and unashamed theft have become standard news to the public. However, good mafia policy is tempered so as not to overdo the extraction of the guilty, in order to avoid losing of this source of revenue. Hence, the criminal is as often the only power of legal mitigation and at the same time the protector of the community: local security is on offer from the military in an entirely informal way, negotiated between village elders and the main big man, who more often than not is a commanding officer. The researcher Judith Verweijen summarises her findings about FARDC officers as being part of the local nobility, representative of the state and the 'Big Man'. Accordingly FARDC commanders are required to distribute both symbolic and material resources to the communities in their area of deployment. These are 'not only their legally mandated and professionally determined objects of

163 Prendergast, et al. (2011), p.3

164 United Nations (2010), Final Report of the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of Congo, United Nations Security Council, New York, p.62 see also United Nations (2011), Final Report of the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of Congo, United Nations Security Council, New York. pp.109ff, and Lezhnev (2011), np

protection, but also their clientele constituencies'.[165] In the heavily militarised zones of the East, FARDC conjoined with the local population, participate in all public events as the local authorities, be this football matches or important marriages. However, whether these soldiers represent the state ruled from Kinshasa in any positive way remains disputable. Community level arrangements are equally revolving around individual profit generation as around general security.

The process of military integration after the war proceeded slowly under the transitional government. The reform of the armed forces was an 'open heart' operation. One illustration of an army operating whilst in the midst of a restructuring process was the reaction to an infiltration of Rwandan troops into South Kivu in December 2004. Rwandan soldiers aimed at attacking Hutu rebels of the FDLR on Congolese territory. About 10,000 FARDC troops deployed, including former FAC, MLC, RCD-ML and even Maï-Maï; they suffered from a lack of equipment, food and means of transport. Poorly equipped former MLC units were sent to fight, whilst better equipped units of ex-FAC remained in reserve.[166] Many soldiers deserted and some units even fought each other for access to ammunition and food.[167] During this short campaign, FARDC elements of former RCD rebels, then nominated as the 123rd Battalion of the 12th Brigade, reportedly committed war crimes against civilians. Exchange of hostilities between rebel units continued throughout the process of integration of armed forces well into 2006.[168]

Some of the new regiments resulting from the reforms were mergers of former FAZ with AFDL rebel forces; some were a mix of all kinds of other mutineers or guerrilla groups, as well as more formal militia. The 2004 plan

165 Non published draft paper, courtesy of Judith Verweijen, Utrecht University
166 Turner (2007), pp.139f
167 Ibid. pp.132f
168 Ibid. pp.139f

included a proper vetting process of future soldiers – a highly selective recruitment including recycling of ex-regular soldiers of the FAZ and a *formation de base,* – to achieve integrated battalions (or, later, regiments). Remaining combatants were to be demobilised or integrated into the police. Little of this was implemented, as was agreed, before the 2006 election.[169] Congolese officers blame donors' narrow interest in just one aspect of the whole reform process, the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration procedure.[170] By contrast, the vetting process to identify potential loyal professional soldiers with sufficient integrity and dismiss others, although mainly organised by the EUSEC[171] operation, was underfunded from the start. Former insurgent leaders, some of whom never commanded units stronger than 50 fighters, kept their self-appointed ranks as Colonel, Major General or even *General de corps d'armée* when they joined the regular army as a result of the Sun City/Pretoria peace negotiations. As a result, new battalions and regiments remained non-integrated; in other words, they simply saluted another flag post while keeping their loyalty to their former rebel commander cum FARDC officer.[172] With little achieved to better the situation on the ground, in August 2005 MONUC and EUSEC, who were to monitor and guide the progress, called for the instant establishment of nine brigades for the most vulnerable territories in the East (Bunia, Goma, and Uvira), when tensions in the region increased again. One would expect standardised military training as necessary to establish a new army. However, again Congolese soldiers are trained in a non-concerted way: Chinese trainers in Kamina do not

169 ICG (2006), *Security Sector Reform in the Congo*, Africa Report, 104, pp.17f

170 Interview CO 14 with Congolese colonel involved in the process, Kinshasa 2011

171 EU Advisory and Assistance Mission for Security Reform

172 To have an idea of one detail of the estimated costs for the transport of all combatants to integration centres, without road and rail, about 143 flight hours of Boeing 727 and 707 aircraft and 340 hours of Antonov 26 and 12 would have been necessary.

communicate with US trainers in Kisangani or EUSEC trainers in other regions.[173]

After waves of desertions across all ranks, at times in large groups, which accompanied the vetting process, officers again pursued their personal interests, facilitated by the possession of arms and the loyalty of their client soldiers and weak loyalty to the government in Kinshasa. During late 2005 and early 2006 General Nkunda, for example, himself a renegade officer who joined the FARDC from the RCD-G, benefited from many desertions of Rwandophone soldiers who were previously integrated in the FARDC and who thereafter joined his *Congrès national pour la défense du people* (CNDP), a proxy force from Rwanda established to fight Hutu militias in the DRC.[174] Peter Karim, of the *Front des nationalistes et intégrationnistes,* and Martin Ngudjolo of the *Movement des révolutionnaires Congolais* each brought their 3,000 fighters with them. Their integration as colonels was facilitated by the rebel commanders' willingness to liberate seven Nepalese UN peacekeepers they had captured a week before.

The capabilities of the FARDC developed inefficiently as demonstrated by its first major operations in East Congo against the local Rwandophone militia CNDP. After President J. Kabila realised in late 2007 that his armed forces were unable to defeat this 5-6,000 renegade troop militarily, he gave in to negotiations with Kigali.[175] The arrangement found between Kigali and Kinshasa was as follows. Firstly, Kigali would use its leverage with the CNDP commanders to convince them to integrate into the FARDC; secondly, General Nkunda, the militia's leader, was neutralised; and, finally, Rwandan regular

173 Robinson (2012), p.492

174 Nkunda was arrested by Rwandan forces in 2009 and remains in house arrest by August 2013

175 HRW (2009), *Selling Justice Short*, Human Rights Watch, London, p.52

military forces would deploy to East Congo in order to fight the FDLR.[176] Under Nkunda's former second in command at the time, Bosco Ntaganda, these soldiers again joined the FARDC, however forming an autonomous cohesive unit within the larger armed force and maintaining separate command structures. They also resisted efforts to be redeployed outside the Kivus and have actually doubled their troop numbers to 11,000 soldiers' between 2008 and 2011.[177] The International Crisis Group summed up the process as follows:

> The Congolese authorities pretended to integrate the CNDP into the political system; while the latter pretended to be integrated into the FARDC [and] both have acted in bad faith.[178]

The joint Congolese-Rwandan military operation was launched in January 2009. This operation, which could have been a state-strengthening measure to establish central government control over the entire territory, remained under the personal control of the President. The Constitutional rights of Parliament were ignored, and the FARDC was consulted only after the arrangement with the former enemy had been concluded.

Having gained no success, the 2009 joint DRC-Rwanda campaign Umuja Wetu, or Kimia I (Our Unity), was repeated one year later under the name Kimia II in cooperation with MONUC. This operation, soon rebranded Amani Leo (Peace Now), again a quest to accept military control over the national territory, failed by not following up on an initial success and because of an unsustainable drain of desertions. During the last year of operation Amani Leo

176 Ndaywel e Nziem (1998) p.165; the last two companies of this Rwandan force was repatriated in October 2012, when the DRC accused Kigali of supporting another FARDC internal mutiny

177 United Nations (2011), p.2f

178 ICG (2012), *Eastern Congo: Why Stabilisation Failed*, Africa Briefing, 91, p.2

the Congolese armed forces' brigades were restructured into a regimental system of 26 regiments, a reform considered necessary to overcome parallel chains of command, but which did not actually achieve its aim. This created time and space for the armed groups to recover.[179] When, finally, the mistreatment of the population by soldiers involved in Amani Leo became untenable, the operation was folded in April 2012.[180]

The next crisis was probably a foretold story. In April 2012 several hundred soldiers, a majority of them former CNDP, carved out a fiefdom in eastern Congo's North Kivu province, started organising a local administration in cooperation with traditional rulers, and began collecting taxes.[181] This mutiny, which is called M23 after the date of the peace agreement that had been the basis for its integration into the FARDC (March 23rd 2009),[182] soon defined itself as a political movement with a military branch called the 'Congolese Revolutionary Army' (ARC), very much comparable to the RPR/RPA of the civil war in neighbouring Rwanda. The FARDC again turned out to be incapable of defeating this mutiny militarily.[183] Desperation in the Congo supreme command was reflected by attempts to recruit non-state militias to join their fight.[184] In late November 7,000 FARDC fled from the advancing 1,500 ARC, plundering on the way the homes of the citizens of

179 Ibid. p.6

180 Hogg, Johnny and Pascal Fletcher (2012), *Kabila Halts Military Operations in East Congo*, Reuters, np

181 Radio Okapi (2012a), Nord-Kivu: le M23 installe progressivement son administration locale à Rutshuru, 7 August (North Kivu, the M23 progessively installed its local administration over Rutshuru, 11 August

182 See Stearns (2012)

183 Radio Okapi (2012b), Nord-Kivu: de nouveaux affrontements entre FARDC et M23 signalés à Bweza; BBC News Africa (2012), DR Congo troops 'flee into Uganda' after rebel clashes, 1 July 2012

184 On 23 August Agence France Presse reported that the government negotiated to this end with Maï-Maï chief Janvier Karairi to provide assistance through his 4,500 fighters, AFP, 23 August 2012, *À l'est, le chaos profite aux combattants maï-maï, courtisés pour contrer le M23*

Goma, the regional capital, which was then occupied by their enemy.[185] According to a United Nations official in the town of Minova, retreating FARDC looted residents for three nights, and UN peacekeepers had to protect civilians from government troops.[186]

After Goma city was occupied by M23 a non-declared truce was used by the rebels to formulate their demands, and by the government to call for a new international 'neutral military force' to substitute for the incompetent FARDC. By December 2012, M23 had shot its way to the negotiating table, repeating a pattern the reader has become familiar with.

By late 2012 other elements of the FARDC were in mutiny. On 16 August, Colonal John Tshibangu, a former RCD member, and 20 of his soldiers defected from their garrison in central Congo, Kasai province, founding in the process another armed group called *Mouvement pour la revendication de la vérité des urnes*. Former chief of the Congolese general staff Faustin Munene had deserted from the FARDC in 2010 to Brazzaville. His anti-governmental guerrilla group, the *Armée de résistance populaire* (ARP), claims that Joseph Kabila's appetite for personal rule is the main obstacle to peace in the country.[187] Mutinies of FARDC units on a smaller scale are still happening, even if not all of them develop into a civil war situation like in the M23 case.[188] Meanwhile small wars are on-going, uncontrolled by the authorities, like the one carried out by Rwandan FDLR

185 Military support for the FARDC by UN combat helicopters was abandoned when the regular army fled the scene.

186 Associated Press (2012), *DRC and M23 Rebels Negotiate in Uganda*, AP News24, 25 November

187 Rigaud, Christof (2012), Interview with Gereral Munene, Kabila est le seul obstacle à la paix, np

188 Veit, Alex (2011), Intervention as Indirect Rule: The Politics of Civil War and State-building, Campus, Frankfurt, pp.224-226

rebels who, together with a local militia (Nyadura), burn down and plunder villages at will. [189]

A 2011 Belgian evaluation of the FARDC reads like a summary of Congolese military organisations from the colonial *Force Publique* to the FAC: first, forces are left to fend for themselves, and the average soldier has little choice but to engage in complementary activities or find means to extract his subsistence to the detriment of the local people he is meant to protect;[190] and, secondly, soldiers are not housed in decent conditions, and they are inadequately and irregularly paid.[191] An attempt to separate the chain of command from the chain of payment had very limited success, firstly, for simple logistical reasons and, more important, because of the resistance by officers all along the chain of command to relinquish control over the purse.[192] In a more recent Belgian assessment of June 2012 by Belgian military advisors requested by the Congo, the construction of the FARDC was described as a titanic task (*une tâche titanesque*).[193] Practical reasons were cited for the difficulties, for instance, the remoteness of training facilities. Kisangani, the place for the establishment of the 1st Integrated Brigade is 1200 km as the crow flies from Kinshasa and is itself divided between three major armed factions, a point of extreme tension.[194]

The FARDC was meant to be an army based on the spirit of inclusiveness, which was, according to Stearns and Borello, the *Leitmotif* of the transition from an all-embracing war between numerous armed actors

189 Radio Okapi (2012c), *Nord-Kivu : des Maï-Maï et des FDLR se disputent les recettes des barrières routières*, 28 August

190 Laurays, Pascal (2012), *PPM : l'aventure belgo-congolaise*, Revue Militaire Belge/Belgisch Militair Teidschrift, 4, June, 73-80, p.76f

191 Ibid. p.74

192 Interview Co 12 EUSEC military advisor Colonel Marco Hekkens, Kinshasa, June 2011

193 Laurays (2012), p.74

194 Ibid.

towards the synergy of those actors in a unified army.[195] This inclusiveness, however, did not result in peace between the former enemies. Rather, it was the price to be paid to appease former warlords and their entourages. Integration in the FARDC is a revolving door militia use to get in and out of the regular forces. The formerly integrated Maï-Maï Lafontaine[196] deserted again in 2012 when they found out that other militia were granted better conditions.[197] They then attacked the FARDC to gain arms and killed dozens of soldiers.[198] Another example of the revolving door is the career of 'General' Albert Kahasha, alias 'Foka Mike'. In January 2013 a new rebel organisation was founded in Bukavu, South Kivu.[199] This *Union des Forces Révolutionnaires du Congo* declared war on the government.[200] In 2003, after the Pretoria Agreement, Albert Kahasha had joined the FARDC with his Maï Maï *Mudundu 40*. In 2005 Colonel Kahasha became commander of FARDC 808 brigade, which at the time fought the ADF-Nalu rebellion, a Ugandan oppositional militia based in the DRC. After the contested 2011 general elections Kahasha defected from the FARDC in protest. He then joined M23, but returned to the FARDC again in November 2012. One week later he deserted again with soldiers and many supplies.[201] In 2012 too, the Maï-Maï

195 Stearns, Jason and Federico Borello (2011), *Bad Karma Accountability for Rwandan Crimes in the Congo*, in Straus, Scott and Waldorf, Lars, Remaking Rwanda: State Building and Human Rights After Mass Violence, University of Wisconsin Press, Madison,

196 Militia named after its leader, who has a long career as warlord with other Maï-Maï

197 Lamb, et al. (2012), p.9

198 The number of fatalities is given as 19 to 31 killed, AlJazeera (2012), *Clashes in Eastern Congo Claim Lives*, Aljazeera, 6 June, np

199 Bagayamukwe Tadji, Gustave (2013), Création de l'Union des Forces Révolutionnaires du Congo UFRC, Bukavu; see also Johnson, Dominic (2013), *UFRC: eine "neue Rebellion" im Kongo?*, Die Tageszeitung, 2 February

200 See ICG (2012), *Eastern Congo: The ADF-NALU's Lost Rebellion*, Africa Briefing, 93, online edition

201 Oxfam (2012), *Commodities of war. Communities speak out on the true cost of conflict in Eastern DRC*, Oxfam Briefing Paper, November, 164, p.22; a snapshot list of 'negative forces', as the armed groups are called by the Congolese government, dating from November 2012, includes the Alliance des Forces Démocratiques (ADF), the Alliance des Patriotes pour un Congo Libre et Souverain (APCLS, recruiting among the Hunde) 201, the Force des Résistances Patriotiques en Ituri (FRPI), the Union des Patriotes Congolais pour la Paix (UPCP), tribal Maï-Maïs like Nyaturu (Hutu), Sheka (Nyange), Shetani (Nande), Yakutumba (Bembe), and the well-known FDLR, LRA, and M23. Smaller local Maï-Maï like

Yakutumba, and the *Parti d'action et de la reconstruction du Congo-force armée Alléluia* (PARC-FAAL) joined the regular force, and in January 2013 the *Force populaire pour la libération du Congo* (FPLC) announced its willingness to join the FARDC for the purpose of fighting M23. Another offer voluntarily to join the armed forces by the Maï-Maï Bulongo, after the killing of their leader, was however rejected.[202] It remains unclear how long such militias' integration may last. In early 2013 in Katanga irregular military activity by the Maï-Maïs Gédéon and by Kata Katangais increased rapidly.[203]

In 2012 Richard Dowden wrote that the post transitional era after 2006 did not lead to a government and an army 'capable to produce security [rather] kleptocracy remains the zeitgeist of its ruling class'.[204] The inheritance from Mobutu's reign – an unprofessional, undisciplined, fragmented, poorly organised, corrupt and predatory military – 'was still the standard in 2011', larger in size and even further de-professionalised by rebels without basic training, many of them in high ranks.[205] Notorious for their criminal energy they now represent uncontrollable military units, which are a national army in name only.

Rega and Tembo tend to fight each other; there are also numerous so-called groups of a diffuse Mouvement populaire d'autodéfense (MPA) which join in fights locally

202 Radio Okapi (2013), *Uvira: des Maï-Maï FPLC se disent prêts à intégrer les FARDC*, 16 January

203 United Nations (2013), *DR Congo: UN envoy warns security situation dire, urges additional resources*, UN News Center, 22 February, online edition

204 Dowden, Richard (2012), *Congo: UK And US Must Play More Consistent Hand To End World's Worst War*, Royal African Society blog, 27 November, np

205 Lugan (1997), p.62; according to the Congolese ministry of defence, in 2009, 63 percent of all military personnel were officers and NCOs, see Melmot, Sebastian (2009), Candide in Congo: The Expected Failure of Security Sector Reform, IFRI Focus Stratégique 9, p.10

2 Conclusion: The State and Army that Never Were

Les FARDC sont une armée fantomatique dans un pays sans Etat ni gouvernance (Godefroid Kä Mana, President, Pole Institute, Goma)[206]

This assessment of the state of the DRC, passed by the Goma-based Pole Institute's President a few days after the fall of Goma to the M23 rebels in November 2012, is widely shared, including among some representatives of the armed forces themselves. As one active Congolese general, who served in all of the regular Congolese armies in his long military career, described the fate of the armed forces to this author in 2011, 'We stumbled from emergency to disaster without ever having a rest to build up our military and our state.'[207]

The Congo/Zaire/DRC state was and remains the perfect quasi-state. If pundits cannot agree on an identifiable moment of state failure for the Congo, this is because the state never existed in the first place; it was never more than an abstract concept. From its official birth in 1960, the Congolese state has remained a hollow shell, internationally sovereign without internal empirical existence. Experienced from the ground, the state has been no more than a colonial overlord, followed by the void of the civil war, the long era of Mobutist unashamed personal rule, yet another battlefield criss-crossed and plundered by half a dozen different foreign national armed forces, and, in the more recent period, has become an 'absentee landlord' relying on personal and clientele alliances to control what it can from the national territory and wealth in a constant trial of strength with local and regional power networks.

How did it come to this point? First, with the victory of UN forces over Kinshasa's contestants in the early post-independence war, the window of

206 'The FARDC, a phantom army in a country without state or government'
207 Interview (anonymised) in Kinshasa, July 2011

opportunity for a 'natural' state formation process in the Congo basin was shut. Neither Western powers nor African states at the time could have faced the prospect of the Congo and its neighbours wrestling over their borders for decades or even centuries in a long process of state formation through war in the traditional mode of European and Asian states. Thus, with the forceful maintenance of Congo's unity through external support, the Congolese quasi-state was born.

The second stage was the stalling of the Congolese state-building process. With Mobutu's second *coup d'état* on 25 November 1965, state-building effectively came to an end. Mobutu gradually but proactively dissolved whatever remnants of the project that men such as Lumumba and Kasa-Vubu may have entertained for the Congolese state and then undertook to reshape the Congo into his private property in what looked very much like a more advanced version of King Leopold's CFS. After 1965 Mobutu first led, via his personally loyal ANC, a Bonapartist-type regime, developing – or degrading – the DRC into an 18th century-style presidential monarchy. This regime still could be termed pseudo-democratic and institutional rule with the 1967 foundation of the single party, and it could still have acted as a constructive, so-called 'developmental patrimonial' government. However, in a deliberate misreading of more egalitarian elements of African traditional forms of governance, Mobutu used all of the coercive and corrupt tendencies of the pre-colonial and colonial periods as leverage, thereby eliminating any checks and balances that may have existed in Central African rule patterns. By 1970 the country had an adapted patrimonialised colonial state structure combining the influence of pre-colonial concepts of kingship with a prefectural administrative apparatus, which put it in constant rivalry with local power

players.[208] Compared to Cold War patterns of governance, the regime was able to concentrate power combining features of Western-style presidentialism and the Eastern single-party model, as international patrons were little inclined to question its institutional underpinnings and democratic credentials.[209] Mobutu's role as a client of Northern patrons is often interpreted as a one-sided hierarchical centre-periphery relationship. However, it is obvious that he benefitted at least as much from the constellation formed by his alleged masters.[210]

Little change occurred with Mobutu's fall. Laurent Désiré Kabila's short-lived reign (1997-2001) was only long enough to abort the foetal process of democratic state-building in the country, but insufficient to assert any kind of firm rule – especially as he owed his military victory entirely to the support of his Ugandan and Rwandese backers – whereas the post-transition governments of Joseph Kabila after 2006 clearly tended towards the renaissance of Mobutu-type personal rule.[211] Few state-strengthening measures, such as the creation of a broad structure of regional governments, as provided by the Constitution, have been implemented. Military administration and oversight is no exception.[212]

208 Callaghy (1984), p.40

209 This symbiotic strategy of Northern and African countries was branded 'policy of extrapolation' by François Bayart, see Bayart (1999)

210 As Niklas Luhmann has shown, donations produced further demands and claims for an escalation of support to the recipients, see Luhmann, Niklas (1981), Politische Theorie im Wohlfahrtsstaat, Guenter Olzog Verlag, Munich-Vienna

211 'Many Congolese believe that one has never actually overcome Mobutism because Kabilaism (kabilisme) is Mobutism at another evolutionary level'; interview with Professor Jean Omasombo, Cros, Marie-France (2010), *Décentralisation au Congo: l'échec ?* , LaLibre, 14 April, translation by this author

212 By 2012, the school for NCOs in Kitona and the military academy in Kananga were established through support from France and Belgium respectively. A process of physical identification of FARDC soldiers was financed and executed by EUSEC RD Congo, see EEAC (2012), Mission de conseil et d'assistance en matière de réforme du secteur de la sécurité en République démocratique du Congo dans le domaine de la défense (EUSEC RD Congo), European External Action Service, Brussels

The constant striving of successive Congolese regimes to prevent state-strengthening and condone or encourage state-weakening measures is in line with the Congolese patronage-based political culture in which

> connections and cash are the currencies of power and influence, […] with the ruler cast in the role of a superpatron dexterously handling carrots and sticks.[213]

In such a system, the public and private spheres are but two sides of the same coin, the exchange of self-serving favours is the norm, and the logic of personalised ties thoroughly penetrates legal-rational institutions. Such a context allows no more than the emergence of a quasi-state and its security twin, the quasi-army.

The successive embodiments of the Congolese quasi-army share several common features throughout their history:

- First, rather than being a coherent and rigorously organised body with a cone-shaped chain of command, it has mostly consisted of disconnected military bands directly reporting to their immediate civilian or military sub-regional commander[214];
- Second, disobedience on all levels appears as a constant condition from the FP to the FARDC. The reoccurring reincorporation of mutineers and rebels into the regular forces – from the 1960 mutineers, to the Lumumbist, Katangan, and Kasaian rebels into the FAZ, to MLC and RCD soldiers into the FAC, and to CNDP troops into the FARDC – has resulted in the national armed forces being little more than a disorderly conglomerate of undisciplined military personnel; and

213 Lemarchand (2008), p.271
214 Shaw (1984), p.18

- Third, the proficiency of the Congolese military has historically been low. Even if they have at times demonstrated acceptable and even occasionally good tactical capacities, at the operational level they have depended permanently on foreign backing.[215] Mutinies and rebellions, as well as external military challenges, could only be defeated with the assistance of foreign military. The FAZ fighting on its own for the first time in 1996 was utterly defeated by AFDL, and its successor, the FAC, could only be saved from defeat by Angolan and Zimbabwean forces. The 2008 and 2009 to 2010 campaigns against militias in the Eastern provinces were failures; and, during the 2012-13 M23 crisis, the FARDC was routed at first contact with armed opponents.[216]

These outcomes are largely the product of Mobutu's treatment of the national armed forces. Understanding the threat to his personal regime that the military could pose, Mobutu set out systematically to destroy the emerging army through various, mutually reinforcing means. Thus, the degree of professionalism that could be imparted to the force via officers' training pursued at European military academies was undermined by:

- General deliberate neglect;
- The nurturing of corruption;
- The tribalisation of the officer corps;
- The politicisation of the corps;

215 Oberst Valentin, interview CO 11, Kinshasa 2011

216 The fleeing FARDC regrouped in Minova town, where they immediately started looting houses. MONUSCO has since threatened to stop any cooperation with these particular brigades if there were no legal consequences for the 126 rapes the FARDC committed within two days of arrival, see BBC News Africa (2013), *UN in DR Congo 'Army Rape' Ultimatum*, 8 March

- The micro-management of units by the presidency and fragmentation of the chain of command (a practice actively replicated by Joseph Kabila); and
- The fragmentation of the force structure after the Shaba wars, as Mobutu's short-lived aspiration to have a coherent and efficient army relapsed into a preference for many small units of able infantry warriors, which are easier to control and sufficient for the purposes of indirect rule.

In that context, a positive relationship between the armed forces and the population never developed. Having played no role in the movement for national independence, the military remained as estranged from the people in the new Congolese state as it had been under the Belgian colony. This fact finds its expression in a slogan popular among soldiers: *civil azali monguana ya soldat* – the civilian is the enemy of the soldiers. Never an instrument for interstate warfare, the military was transformed more and more exclusively under the Mobutu regime into a tool to assert and distribute power internally, repressing opponents as necessary. The factual legal immunity enjoyed by the soldiers over many decades evolved over time into impunity, to the point of representing a key characteristic of the Congolese military in the present time. '*La société civile doit s'occuper de ses affaires*' – 'Civil society should mind its own business',[217] reacted the FARDC's spokesman to demonstrations against widespread rape organised by civil society in Eastern Congo in 2011, confirming the view of many that the military has become the largest single threat to civilians in the country. [218]

217 Broadcast Radio Ocapi, 15 Sept. 2011

218 Gebrewold-Tochalo, Belachew (2009), Anatomy of Violence: Understanding the Systems of Conflict and Violence in Africa, Ashgate, Farnham, p.94

Up to this point, the military therefore has failed entirely to 'reconquer hearts and minds' via the delivery of security services to the people, not to mention the even more ambitious support it is supposed to provide to the country at some stage in its quality as *armée de développement*.[219] So far, not a single building, school, or bridge can be reported to have been built that would at least compensate for installations run-down or even destroyed by the armed forces, which would help to rebuild the confidence of the population. Many citizens still perceive the 'State', including its armed branch, the military, through the metaphor of Bula Matari, and the two terms are used interchangeably, symbolising a form of overwhelming and crushing power.

This does not prevent certain forms of symbiosis between the armed forces and the population, however. For example, many Congolese have at least one family member in the military or gendarmerie, and discussions with ordinary Congolese citizens reveal that they consider the cover of arms and uniform as the only means of protection against crime. At the local level, individual officers may gain the confidence of citizens by providing security measures at sport events or on market days on a case by case basis.[220] However, such operations are part of a patron's role exercised by military officers rather than regular state operations. In the eyes of the population, they are interchangeable with the provision of security by local militiamen or self-defence groups. Similarly, extractions perpetrated by marauding soldiers, legally belonging to the army, but temporarily outside the reach of command, are no different from those committed by ever proliferating and constantly mutating non-state armed groups.[221]

219 Chapter I and Article 71 of the military Basic Law (August 2011)

220 See Verweijen, Judith (2013), *Military business and the business of the military in the Kivus*, Review of African Political Economy, 40, 135, 67-82

221 Schneckener, Ulrich (2009), Spoilers or Governance Actors? Engaging Armed Non-State Groups in Areas of Limited Statehood, DFG Research Centre Berlin, see table on p.17

A form of alternative security structures is therefore emerging in some parts of the country, unstable and weak, but at the same time sufficient to prevent a complete collapse of law and order. They may, as in the North Eastern Ituri province even come to frame the local social organisation, as the militarisation of society by long years of war has prompted a shift away from traditional rulers to new military-led power structures.[222] These alternative security structures are the hallmark of indirect rule. Like their European predecessors in pre-modern times, they may not produce total and dependable control, but may be sufficient to hold major risks at bay and to provide for arm's length steering from the centre, but at the same time they remain weak enough not to challenge the central power. In sum they may more easily be acceptable to a personal ruler than a strong institutionalised army would be.

In such a security system in which the armed forces are deprived of a reliable access to state funds, but unlike the officers who are members of the upper crust of the patronage system, the lower ranking military have little other advantage than their residual client status and the arms enabling them to feed on the wider population.

> Mercenaries and marauding gangs in ridiculously small numbers destroy entire regions, displaying greed for bounty combined with an increasingly self-aggravating cruelty.

This is not the contemporary Eastern DRC, but Golo Mann's description of Europe's 17th Century Thirty Years War. Mann continues:

222 Vlassenroot, Koen and Timothy Raeymaekers (2004), *The Politics of Rebellion and Intervention in Ituri: the Emergence of a New Political Complex?* , African Affairs, 103, 412, 385-412, p.385

> The Thirty Years War was one in a political environment of state formation, or *Unstaaten.* Non-permissive to modern configurations the military system remained one of rough irrationality'.[223]

One cannot fail to be struck by the similarity of the two situations, more than three centuries apart. The Congolese *Lumpen-militariat* embodied both in its regular and irregular armed forces, is a terrifying reminder of the marauding *Landsknechte* of the Thirty Years War of state formation. More than any other picture, they symbolise the Congolese Tillian state. Curtailed by colonisation and again by a wide international consensus in the early 1960s, Congolese state formation is unfolding before our eyes at the beginning of the 21st Century.

223 Mann, Golo (1971), Wallenstein, S.Fischer Verlag, Frankfurt/Main, p.346, Mann's term 'Unstaaten' was unfortunately not picked up by other authors. It perfectly describes quasi-statehood as opposed to the term 'Nichtstaat' (non-state)

Chapter Four: Cameroon – A Two Speed Army

Unlike the other two countries examined in the present thesis, Cameroon has seldom been in the headlines in recent decades. The country has been engaged in no other external war than the relatively minor border conflicts with its neighbour Nigeria in 1981 and again in 1994-96; no military coup or forceful toppling of the government has been attempted since 1984, endowing Paul Biya (elected in 1982) with one of the longest presidencies on the continent; and domestic unrest has remained limited to social rather than political outbursts in the early 1990s and 2005-2008, following the eradication of the insurgent nationalist campaign in 1970. Congruently, little is heard outside and even inside about its military, which may, among African armies, most deserve the label *la grande muette*, after the French model on which it was patterned. Generally speaking, the Cameroonian armed forces have little visibility, enjoy a fair degree of respect from the people,[1] have not been suspected of harbouring political ambitions, and are considered relatively more professional than those of most neighbouring countries.

Their apparent conformity to the 'Huntingtonian model', however, only applies up to a certain point. The configuration and development of the national armed forces are part and parcel of the history of immediately pre-independence and post-independence Cameroon, marked by a priority on the needs of a regime put in place in the early 1960s and which has known little evolution since. Cameroon's civilian and military institutions have developed in synchrony, all the more so because the country was deprived of a reference to a pre-colonial experience of statehood. Regime continuity has had a major

1 Very little is reported on the military in the very vibrant Cameroonian press and those few articles discussing it are rather neutral in tone

impact on the configuration of both civilian and military institutions, giving Cameroonian armed forces' subordination to the political leadership a particular meaning.

Consistent with the methodology presented in Chapter 2, this chapter will first provide an historical narrative of Cameroon's state and military formation, demonstrating that both were firmly planted at the end of the French colonial period in the 1950s. It will then proceed to interpret the national armed forces' development through the prism of Cameroon's political culture and the regime's use of this culture to assert its control over civilian and military institutions, whilst recognising the requirement to selectively adapt its armed and security forces to new types of national and international threats and risks. This will enable us to relate Cameroon's fragmented military to the presidential regime's adroit management of the political landscape, with a constant attendant risk of state-weakening well captured in 2010 by the International Crisis Group's somewhat rhetorical title: *Cameroon, a Fragile State?*[2]

1 The Three Stages of State and Army Building in Cameroon

1.1 Forms of Governance and Military from Pre-colonial Times to Independence

Having inherited its name from its first European visitors, the Portuguese[3], Cameroon appears in its pre-colonial form as a territory of stateless societies endowed with some tribal organisation. As Victorin Hameni has demonstrated, it is difficult to date from when one can first speak of the military of Cameroon.[4] With state formation in Central Africa restricted to the savannahs bordering the large forests of the Congo Basin, little political institutionalisation took place prior to colonialism on what is today's Cameroon

2 ICG (2010a)

3 From *Rio dos Camarões* (River of Shrimps in Portuguese)

4 See Hameni Bieleu, Victorin (2012), Politique de défense et sécurité nationale du Cameroun, L'Harmattan, Paris

territory. Western Central Africa with the exception of the Loango kingdom was populated by small groups of slave hunters who delivered their Batéké neighbours to Portuguese merchants.[5] Accordingly, the Cameroonian history of warfare was mainly restricted to the slave hunt, as was typical for West-Central Africa.[6] As of the 16th century spread of Islam to the Maghreb, the feudal organised Northern part of Cameroon had been connected to the Arab trans-Saharan slave trade, especially via converted Fulani warriors. The South had remained primarily a stateless region, although between the 16th and 18th centuries about 90 small tribal polities formed a defensive confederation.

By the 19th century this construct had entirely disappeared due to internal infighting.[7] Europeans were confined to small coastal places, which had their main defensive installations against the sea. African kings were reliable partners rather than a threat as both sides partook in the slave trade. It is only when the Atlantic slave trade was abolished in the 19th century that the Douala kings had to seek protection by Europeans because their main source of revenue and power had faded. The colonial configuration that emerged was a continuing win-win alliance among partners, Western and African.[8]

1.2 From the German Protectorate to the French/British Mandate

During the colonial period, which started as a 'deal' between local minor kings and a reluctant German government, feudal structures survived colonial state-building basically unhampered in the North of the country, where the pre-

5 Coastal chefferies, such as the Gabonese 'Kingdoms' of Louis and of Quaben, were only recognised as states by those Europeans in need of someone to sign a treaty of subjugation; all of the aforementioned were absorbed by the French Gabonese colony

6 Bachiri, Mohammed and Maniragaba Balibutsa (2005), Causes et Moyens de Prévention des Crimes Rituels et des Conflict en Afrique Centrale, UNESCO, Libreville, p.3

7 Minihan, James (2002), Encyclodaedia of Stateless People Vol. IV, Greenwood Press, Westport, pp.1771ff

8 In the North, Germans had found an agreement with traditional leaders, who would formally recognise a colonial status, and pay tribute, in return for German military support. In the South newly introduced farming and the construction of the port of Douala necessitated more modern administrative conditions. At independence 17,000 mostly farming French settlers were established in the Southern half of Cameroon

colonial overlords only became temporary clients to their new Western patrons. This did not change with the takeover by France and Britain after World War One. The circumstances in the South were different: there, newly invented 'traditional' elites were originally established by German and later maintained by French colonists.[9] In sum, the German and then the French colonial state and its sovereign successor maintained the pre-colonial power structure of the Northern feudal hereditary elites, and consolidated new indirect-rule patronage networks in the South. Economically, unlike the Northern unchanged feudal system, most of the Southern economic infrastructure installed by German companies was taken over by French agriculturists.[10] Although the system as a whole was less oppressive and extractive than in proper colonies because every *centime* raised had to be spent within,[11] indirect rule, or to use the French official term introduced in 1924, the *indigénat*, was never meant to develop and strengthen a proper state in Cameroon – even if this was officially the task to be fulfilled under the League of Nations' mandate.[12] With its lack of an indigenous pre-colonial military tradition, from 1916 on, after the African Askaris[13] serving the *Kaiser* were defeated in both Cameroon and Rwanda, the military conditions in these two future mandate territories started resembling each other to the extent that the difference between Belgian and French military allowed for. It is important in this context to recognise the impact of the prohibition to recruit locals into the military under the mandate rule. African soldiers serving the French in Cameroon came from other West and Central African countries, just as Congolese soldiers manned the Belgian forces in

9 See Geschiere, Peter (1993), *Chiefs and Colonial Rule in Cameroon: Inventing Chieftaincy, French and British Style*, Africa: Journal of the International African Institute, 63, 2, 151-171

10 See Keen, David (1998), *Top-Down Economic Violence*, Adelphi Papers, 38, 320, 23-44, pp.39ff , BBC News Africa (2013), chap.7

11 Manning (1998), pp.76f

12 In a mandate territory the establishment of military forces was not permitted.

13 Arabic for soldier عسكري, see Morlang, Thomas (2008), Askaris und Fitafita: Farbige Söldner in den deutschen Kolonien, Ch Links Verlag, Berlin

Ruanda-Urundi. A double alienation of African soldiers from the people and the country therefore emerged in both Cameroon and in Rwanda, with its roots in the colonial system.

In 1920 the militarisation of the demilitarised Cameroonian territory begun with the formation of a gendarmerie force called the *Garde régionale camerounaise*, which was rebranded the *Garde indigène* in 1925 – even if it did not count more than 26 men until late into the Second World War. This force was then gradually expanded and in 1940 integrated as gendarmerie in the French military forces loyal to General de Gaulle's *France libre.* In 1945 they finally joined the metropolitan French Equatorial forces. On 1 June 1946 this gendarmerie was dissolved and then re-established to form civilian police units, keeping however the gendarmerie military uniforms and insignia.[14] Officially non-military, this guard remained attached to the French gendarmerie via their French officers, forming its general staff (*état-major*).[15] There was some confusion with the chain of command because it reported to both the French high commissioner for Cameroon and to the superior command of the French forces for Equatorial Africa (EAF). Structured into platoons the guards were at the direct disposal of the regional administrators of the mandate territory. In 1947 the force was less than 900 men strong, but reached 2,000 by 1960.[16]

1.3 From World War II to Independence

After World War Two the colonial situation changed radically and ceased to be a relatively stable and controlled one, with both the metropolises and

14 Most well known is the 'grenade de la gendarmrie' insignia, see Ministère des Forces Armées Camerounaises (1980), Livre d'or des forces armées camerounaises, Cible, Paris, np

15 3,000 Cameroonian soldiers fought on the German side in WW I against 7,000 British, mostly Nigerian troops, and Ghanaian regiments, British Indian colonial forces, and some French and Congolese pelotons. Many of those who had fought with the Germans were allegedly systematically killed between 1916 and 1920, interview CO 12 Cameroonian officer, June 2011

16 Law (1978)

their dependent territories repositioning themselves in an international political context marked by the dawn of the Cold War and the emergence of the Non-Aligned Movement as the standard-bearer of the emancipation of the 'coloured people'.[17] Cameroon found itself in the midst of this late-colonial/Cold War environment, which automatically drew opponents into political camps. Whether intended or not, the independence movement was seen from the West as alignment with communism. Even if this was not initially the truth, Western anti-communist obsession after the Berlin blockade and Eastern expansionist optimism helped define the fault lines by imposing their self-fulfilling prophesies on the rest of the world. Africans had to take sides in the run for independence.[18]

For France, military influence in the region remained key to national interests, as World War II had demonstrated the importance of the African 'Hinterland' in the security of the French territory. The emerging Cold War context diminished in no way that requirement, rather to the contrary. Africa was also to provide a reservoir of agricultural provisions as well as military manpower, in peace and in war equally. The basis of French influence was the *Union Française*, which had, with the constitution of the 4th Republic of 27 October 1946, transformed the French colonies into overseas departments or overseas territories in the boundaries of the former colonies. Its symbol was the by now famous *Rally Paris-Dakar*, launched in 1949, which demonstrated

17 The imperial world disintegrated rapidly: in 1945 the Arab league was founded, and the Dutch East Indies declared independence; 1946 saw the beginning of the war in Indochina; and 1947 saw rebellions in Madagascar and Kenya, while India and Ghana achieved full independence the same year

18 This does not mean that this situation was entirely uncomfortable. Politicians such as Patrice Lumumba, Kwame Nkruma, or Sékou Touré, and later Gamal Nasser and Marien Ngouabi were ancious to exploit this East-West confrontation to their advantage as much as possible, and with some success

practically the unity of a single territory under French domination.[19] The Union fell apart when South East Asia, Morocco, and Tunisia became independent between 1953 and 1957, but the 5th Republic of 4 October 1958 instituted its successor, the *Communauté française.*

As of the early 1950s, however, severe blows were asserted to France's policy aims in Africa and to its self-perception as a great power by defeat in South East Asia (*Dien Bien Phu*), the disastrous Sinai operation, the tragic quagmire of the Algerian war, and political setbacks such as Guinea's rejection by referendum of the *Communauté Française* and the victory of anti-French nationalists in Togolese elections.

In that context, West-Central Africa was gaining increasing value for the French and Cameroon represented a particularly valuable prize. By 1955 Cameroon was openly considered a French strategic outpost (*un avant-poste de l'Union française*);[20] and leading French journalist André Banchet, of *le Monde*, wrote the same year, 'Nobody, whether in Cameroon or abroad, takes it as a secret that Cameroon will continue to remain French, no matter under what constellation.'[21] French influence was not a mere military/security issue, however. Economic/strategic interests in Cameroon were, for example, secured through the Alucam (aluminium-Cameroon) company by its lobbyist Louis-Paul Ajoulat – who was not only a former French minister for overseas possessions, but also president of the Cameroonian territorial assembly (parliament) – in cooperation with the French High Commissioner for Cameroon, Roland Pré.[22]

19 Deltombe, Thomas, et al. (2011), Kamerun, Da Découverte, Paris, p.99, Nowadays perhaps comparable in its perception with the Schengen treaty's impact on free travelling in Europe – something very popular with the populations of the countries included

20 Duval, Eugène-Jean (2004), Le sillage militair de la France au Cameroun,1914-1964, L'Harmattan, Paris, p.189

21 Quoted by Deltombe (2011), p.69

22 Ibid. p.109

The mandate given to France and the United Kingdom according to article 76 of the San Francisco Charter – continuing from the League of Nations mandates – officially aimed at developing the population's capacity for self-rule. Nothing was actually initiated to achieve this aim until 16 April 1957, when France assigned to Cameroon the status of 'State under trusteeship' (*Etat sous tutelle*). It had decided on 13 December 1945 to administer Cameroon as an integral part of France, but it had now abrogated the *indigénat*, a status granted to local populations, which had long contravened the spirit of the mandate. Two overseas-territories representatives from Cameroon had also joined the Constituent Assembly that would draft the French 4th Republic Constitution. Under the *tutelle* regime, Cameroon was to establish a government by 10 May 1957 in order to prepare for independence. By the end of 1959 elections to a Cameroonian Local Assembly were held in preparation for internal autonomy. The Assembly was to elect the Cameroonian Prime Minister.[23] Over the post-war period, France had set up two successive development plans for its overseas territories, one from 1947 to 1953 and one from 1954 to 1957, of which 18 per cent (80 billion Francs, equivalent to US$67 million) went to Cameroon alone.

The new Cameroonian political elites who were to take over from France were to some extent the cultural and ideological products of Western colonialism. Their drive for self-rule did not necessarily alienate them from la *Grande Nation*, whose original philosophical foundations rather promoted political self-determination. However, the political rhetoric of independence movements came in different forms, some of which would allow former collaborators to stay in powerful positions, but others aiming at a changing of the guard. Among important political actors, the nationalist party, *Union des*

23 The first non-elected prime minister, Ahidjo's predecessor, was nominated by the French High Commissioner. He was dismissed as unsuitable to French interests soon after

populations du Cameroun (UPC), was never granted the right to participate in elections and was gradually driven 'underground'. Its leader, Ruben Nyobè, had stepped into the crossfire of competing international, economic and ideological interests. He did represent the genuine aspiration of a part of Cameroon's small upcoming elite to emancipate itself from colonial tutelage, but his affiliation with communist countries was rather an outcome of French exaggerated suppression of the nationalist movement than the expression of a deep conviction.[24]

Democracy, a strong, sovereign state, legal equality, and social justice were uncontested aims to which the emerging Cameroonian political class paid lip service. A national army to secure the newly acquired liberty and serve as an instrument of nation-building was always considered a necessary and helpful tool. At the same time, as will be demonstrated below, the two indigenous patronage systems in the South and the North, as dissimilar as they were, survived as the power bases of the new political class of emerging independent Cameroon. This would eventually result in a situation where the 'dominated of yesterday constitute the mass of the dominated of today'.[25]

On the military front, already in October 1950 France had sub-divided African territories under its control into different *zones de défense*, which not only constituted military regions, but represented strategically autonomous entities. French West Africa, Togo and Central Africa, grouped as the *Zone de défense de l'AOF et du Cameroun* were treated as proper French territory.[26] In Cameroon itself, new units of the French Equatorial African forces had been deployed in 1949 and the indigenous Guards were integrated. With rising

24 The reaction of the United States on Fidel Castro's success in Cuba was a similar situation

25 Bayart, Jean François (1979), L'Etat au Cameroun, Presses de la Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, Paris, p.19

26 Deltombe (2011), p.101

tensions, however, France soon realised that its security capacities were becoming insufficient and, in the early 1950s, forces from Libreville, Brazzaville and Fort Lamy had to be alerted. In December 1956 the French military installed local militias, *milices d'autodéfense*, made up of loyal villagers.[27] This French-initiated and trained local defence force had actually no fighting value, but it helped categorise men of combat age, and negated the UPC's claim to represent the nation. The move was also meant to avoid the mistakes in Indochina by enlisting the local population in the resistance against the nationalists or, as they were seen, the 'communist fifth column'. From the start, however, it was clear that these militias would have to be dissolved as soon as the struggle against the nationalists was won, in order to prevent any potentially competing Cameroonian military organisation.[28] Later on, in 1955, the Cameroon Guards were restructured in order to stiffen counter-insurgency policy. Four additional platoons were created, bringing the force to 2,000 by 1960, from a nucleus of 900 in 1947, and more French officers were appointed.[29]

As independence drew near the main political strategic problem for France was securely to lead the French-designed Cameroonian transitional authorities to independence without having to organise elections before the decisive date, 1 January 1960. The declaration of a state of emergency in 1959 allowed France and its local allies to achieve that goal, at the same time driving the nationalists further underground.[30] When the first elections on the heels of independence were actually held in 1960, the incumbent prime minister,

27 Local self-defence militias, following Algerian example, were set up, in order to respond to the revolutionary strategy of peoples' war, as was assumed to be the aim of the UPC.

28 Deltombe (2011), p.216

29 Hameni Bielu, Victorin (2012), Politique de Défense et Sécurité Nationale du Cameroun, l'Harmattan, Paris, p.387

30 The state of emergency declared in 1959 was only lifted in the early 1970s, and laws against subversion were not repealed until 1990, see Eboussi Boulaga, Fabien (1997), La démocratie de transit au Cameroun, L'Harmattan, Paris, p.66

Ahmadou Ahidjo, won as expected and became the first President. The prevailing political culture, favouring popular inclination to support the 'big man' in power, helped reach the results desired by France and its local protégés.[31]

2 Cameroonian Armies: The Race for Legitimacy

Officially Cameroon's *sous tutelle* government had taken over responsibility for internal security from France on 1 January 1959, exactly one year before independence. It had been clear since the mid-1950s that the *Garde camerounaise* would form the future national army. However, no single command post was occupied by a Cameroonian officer before independence nor even long after: a majority of French officers remained in place until 1975. In fact, Cameroon began independence with two partially integrated, but in reality very different, armies, a French one, and a Cameroonian one.[32]

2.1 The Armed Forces

In Cameroon there were no colonial military forces that could be 'nationalised' at independence. As mentioned above, under the mandate status no Cameroonian was allowed to be recruited by France. However, according to Article 84 of the UN Charter, France could employ the territory's contribution to maintain international peace and security. France thus justified the integration of Cameroonian volunteers into its armed forces by the need to maintain peace and security in Indochina. Francis Atoungou is an example of a Cameroonian who served with the French armed forces there. He was recruited into the French army in 1953 and sent for training in Chad. In 1954, he joined the regiment from Cameroon, which later moved to France, then on to fight in the colonial war in Indochina.[33] This integration was facilitated by acculturation, as

31 Ca 5 with Professor Titi Nwel, Yaoundé

32 Touwa, Ernest (2007), Armée et développement, Tectum Verlag, Marburg, p.91

33 ANCY (1952), *Recrutement volontaires au Cameroun pour l'Indochine, Archiv Nationale Camerounaise Yaounde 1952/ no 917*, I. APA-12150, *Raport condidentiel du chef de*

education in Cameroon had been in French since 1918 and basic education was well-distributed. Deltombe quotes from the private archives of a Cameroonian gendarme, François (!) Yogo Ntonga as saying in 1949: 'Our country is France. We will love it even if it costs us wealth and life.'[34]

The commander of the French forces, General Briand, was deployed as Supreme commander of all services of the French forces in Cameroon, and head of mission to the Government of Cameroon after Independence Day.[35] His tasks included the defence of the territory against foreign threats, organising a *défense intérieure* based on local militias, provided by the *chefferies*, which would immediately transform the nationalist adversary into a domestic enemy.[36] Simultaneously, French metropolitan troops were reinforced to protect key installations such as airports and harbours.[37] Twelve hundred French forces would remain on the territory, with the Cameroonian forces representing one battalion. The forces not only created the Cameroonian army but practically also protected the new government against the insurgency. The military was complemented by the gendarmerie forces whose role it was quickly to train more local gendarmerie forces. On 1 April 1960, a quarter year into independence, the African auxiliaries to the metropolitan French gendarmerie in Cameroun became the Cameroonian national gendarmerie, representing eight companies.[38] The paramilitary *Mission d'organisation de la gendarmerie camerounaise* (MOGC), with 2,500 men, was commanded by 336 French officers and NCOs and was led by French officers until 1967. On 11 July 1960, 77 Cameroonians graduated from

cabinet militaire, 1 Decembre, np; on Cameroonian veterans see Radio Netherlands Worldwide (2010), *Equal veteran pensions well received in Cameroon*

34 Deltombe (2011), p.69

35 Commandant interarmées des forces Françaises au Cameroun, chef de la mission près le Gouvernement de la république du Cameroun

36 AHM Chateau Vincennes (1960), Ministerial instruction from minister of armed forces Guillaumat to gerenral Briand, 14 January, 3001/EMGA/12A in 6H266, Paris, np

37 Deltombe (2011), p.184

38 Touwa (2007), p.95

the then recently founded gendarmerie school, and became platoon commanders.[39]

Whilst also in the April 1960 reorganisation, 46 platoons would form the *garde républicaine*,[40] the creation of the actual Cameroonian army started later, but quickly surpassed the setting up of the gendarmerie. The *Armée de terre* was founded in name three weeks before independence. The first article of the relevant law No 59/57 of 11 November 1959 reads:

> A Cameroonian army is created responsible to the head of the
>
> Prime minister of the Cameroonian government

Recruitment for the future army started in late 1959 with 300 Cameroonians forming the 1st battalion of four companies, ready for the parade on Independence Day on 1 January 1960.[41] In April 370 recruits including a group of seventy French regular soldiers formed the 2nd battalion. A 13th company was annexed, set up with 132 Cameroonians, who had formerly served in the Royal West African Frontier Force.[42]

As happened in many regions formerly under French colonial rule or tutelage, it was soldiers originally loyal to colonial France[43] that formed the nucleus of African armed forces, and who eventually commanded these forces. About half of the troops initially recruited were former French soldiers.[44] The Cameroon navy, for instance, was formed from French forces originally based

39 The school was founded on 24 December 1959. By 1973 a majority of officers were Cameroonians, with only seven French officers and 23 NCOs left.

40 Hameni Bieleu (2012), p.338

41 The soldiers were split in two groups, one parading in Yaoundé, the other one on Douala.

42 With the foundation of the Nigerian army, the Cameroonian citizens found themselves in the wrong African country.

43 In some cases they were soldiers formerly loyal to the United Kingdom, as in the case of Cameroonians who served with the Nigerian armed forces that followed upon the West African Frontier Force (RWAFF) at independence in 1960.

44 Interview Ca 4 with General Semengue, Yaoundé, April 2011

at Pointe Noire in French Equatorial Congo, who had been responsible previously for the lines of communication in the Gulf of Guinea. In 1959 they were reinforced by a unit of pirogues with outboard engines to patrol the Cameroonian rivers. This was the core of the 1960 officially founded *Marine nationale camerounaise*. It was only in July 1973, however, that a Cameroonian *lieutenant de vaisseau* (ship of the line lieutenant) became commander of this service.

Shortly before independence a search for prospective Cameroonian officers was launched. In Cameroon, however, recruitment into the new army and gendarmerie forces proved somewhat of a challenge. Although recruiters visited French universities to enlist Cameroonian students as officer cadets, the military profession was not held in high esteem at the time. In addition, the guards were involved in a war against Cameroonian nationalists, and the legitimacy of this entirely foreign-led force was low. One retired colonel recalls that he was studying engineering in France, hoping to become a university teacher, when he was convinced that he could teach as well young officers once he had finished his own military obligation. His decision to join the armed forces was very confrontational *vis-à-vis* his parents.[45] Only a handful of Cameroonians were enlisted for education at the French *école militaire* immediately after its inauguration in 1959. Other prospective Cameroonian soldiers for both the army and the new *gendarmerie nationale* were identified in different French units in Senegal or Gabon, and among other volunteers in the French metropolitan army.

In October 1961, 300 British-trained soldiers from the former British Cameroon mandate territory joined the Cameroon armed forces as one additional battalion. The English-speaking contingent was immediately

45 His grandfather had served with the German Askaris; military service was unpopular in the educated population.

retrained to French military command customs, undertaking a crash course in French. At the time the first Cameroonian commander of the land armed forces had been appointed. It was Pierre Semengue, one of the young Cameroonians who had been enlisted as volunteers in the French army. Then *sous-lieutenant* Semengue had participated in the competition to join the prestigious military academy of St. Cyr.[46] He was promoted to captain after his premature return from this military education in France.[47] The incoming commander of the Nigerian contingent, James Tataw, was a captain as well. For this reason Semengue was instantly promoted to Commander as there should be no ambiguity about the francophone lead.

Politically, with independence the French High Commissioner was replaced by an ambassador, who defined his task as to consolidate the Ahidjo regime and to prevent Cameroon from becoming a second Guinea.[48] In a letter to Prime Minister Debré the first civilian ambassador, Bénard, insisted that to achieve this aim the Cameroonian chief of staff should always be a French officer. In fact, until 1973 the majority of officers in the Cameroonian armed forces were French. Lieutenant-colonel Semengue was appointed as the first Cameroonian Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces in 1965 replacing the French Colonel Boussiquet. However, five years into independence, Semengue's staff would still be assisted by French colonels. The Cameroonian army remained under unofficial, yet complete, French control, via a sequence of French officers providing 'technical assistance' to the Cameroonian supreme commander and via the actual command of the general staff through the

46 According to his own collection he ranked 259 out of 365 applicants; French sources recall him at place 246 out of 250, interviews Ca 4 with General Semengue and a French liaison officer (anonymised), Yaoundé, 2011

47 He had been urged by his French superiors to return without ending his training as artillery officer. 'If you want to learn to swim, jump into the water,' he cites his former commanding Colonel, Interview with Semengue

48 Letter from Ambassador Bénard to prime minister Debré, quoted by Deltombe (2011), p. 460

éminence grise, Colonel Blanc, at first officially and, later, unofficially until 1968.[49]

2.2 The Other Side, *L'armée de Brousse*

Ruben Um Niobè, the secretary general of the UPC, went clandestine when the French repression became unbearable in early 1955. Um Niobè created a competing national Cameroonian government, which immediately started issuing birth certificates, cadastre certificates, and marriage documents.[50] Purportedly the government-in-hiding ruled over 800 local committees on liberated territory.[51] The nationalist army, the security branch of the alternative state under construction, was the *Comité National d'Organisation* (CNO), created on 2 December 1956, with a World War II veteran, Isaac Um Niobè Pandjok, who had fought for France, as its first commander in chief.[52] This committee would be supported by a general staff, led by Niobè Pandjok and 'two or three other members'.[53] French intelligence was always well informed about the status and whereabouts of the nationalist forces. A detailed order of battle of the CNO, which gives an impression of its ambitions, and the means available, can be found in the military archive of Chateau de Vincennes. According to a report, there was one military district at the beginning, the forces divided into no. 2 Brigade (with 1st and 5th regiment), which would cover the *zone d'action* South/Zanaga, no. 3 Brigade (with 3rd and 4th regiment), which would cover operational zone Nord, and one additional independent regiment (2nd). The 1st regiment was estimated at seven battalions of about 20 men each and the 5th regiment at two such battalions (180 fighters in total). The 2nd regiment was reported as being composed of 230 to 250 men,

49 Interview with General Semengue, see also Deltombe (2011), pp.210-212
50 Eyinga, Abel (1991), L'UPC: une révolution manquée?, Edition Chaka, Paris, pp.89f
51 Deltombe (2011), p.225
52 Ibid.
53 AHM Chateau Vincennes (1958), Note renseignement 16 janvier 1958, ZOPAC No 107/ZPC/S Annexe BRH, No 3, Paris, np

who would probably form the nucleus of the no 1 Brigade. It comprised six battalions plus one reserve, each about 35 strong.[54] Each battalion would be led by an *adjudant-chef,* equivalent to a regimental sergeant-major, curiously an officer rank also in the CNO. Individual operations would be led by a *capitaine de front*, commanding between three and ten combatants. Each combatant carried his *nom de guerre*. However, because the regimental register gave both real name and battle name, details about the identity of every member of the 2nd regiment were known to the French intelligence service. An assessment by the French Lieutenant Soult, responsible for psychological warfare in Cameroun, reads,

> The CNO has no chance whatsoever to develop revolutionary warfare. Although they were able to commit about 100 assassinations between September and December, the forces are dispersed all over the region, dwelling close to villages, thereby avoiding their respective home villages not to have to fight their own kin'.[55]

Another note attached to the order of battle includes an *exposé* sent by the 'commander zone of pacification' (known by its French acronym ZOPAC), Lt. Col. Lamberton, to the Prime Minister of Cameroon, Ahidjo, on 2 December 1958, stating that the insurrection was basically defeated by the killing of Um Niobè by a French commando on 13 September. The report continues that, although the main military task was accomplished, minor problems existed with fighters living in hiding, who, however, had no more access to resources. By 1963 the insurgency had been quasi-terminally crushed.

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54 4th regiment was to be prospective at the time, putting the overall strength of the CNO at 750 to 800 fighters

55 AHM Chateau Vincennes (1958), ZOPAC report no 9/Act/Psy 2 December 1958, note de service no 353/ZPC/S, Paris, author's translation

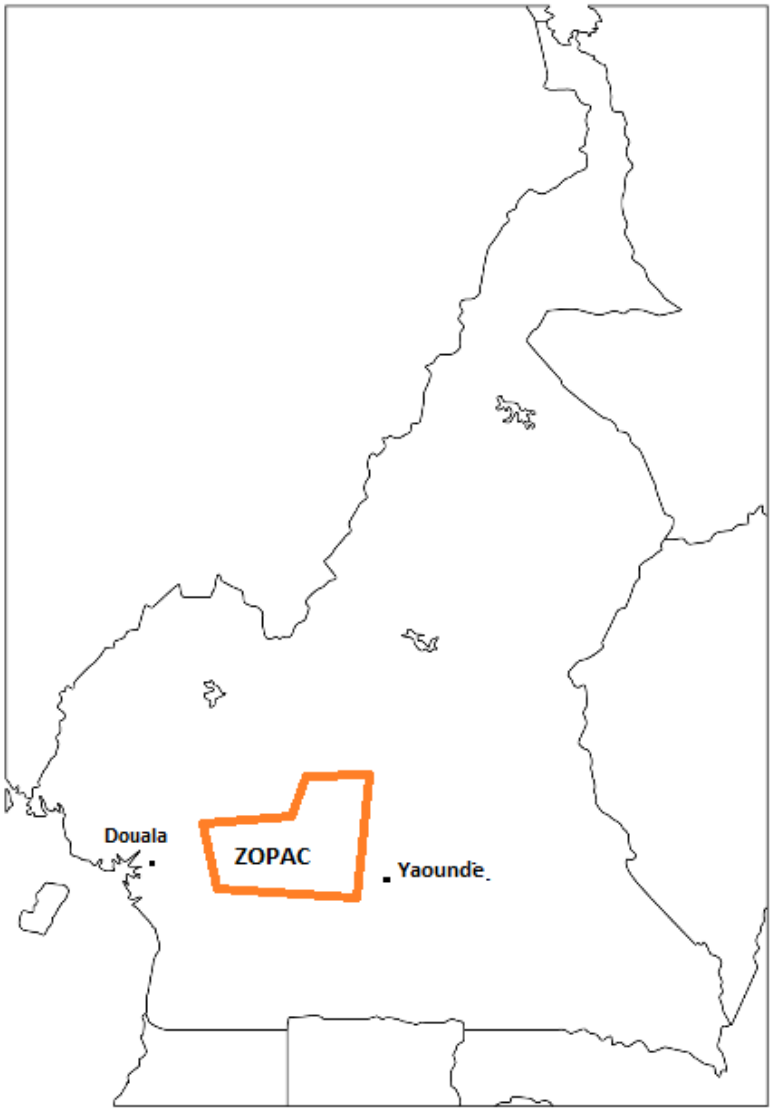

Table 5: Map of Cameroon, the zone of pacification

As explained by a French military advisor to Cameroon, this force never posed any serious threat to the French project of Cameroonian independence arranged in accordance with French interests.[56] In military terms the CNO was inconsequential from the start to its demise. Poorly trained and armed with bows and arrows with poisoned tips, machetes, and a few hunting rifles, its most important 'weapon' was a ceremony that would allegedly harden the fighters' bodies against enemies' bullets.[57] The CNO's true significance was of a political quality as representing the only organisation claiming to be the regular army of a nationalist government in waiting, which had taken up arms

56 Interview Ca 3, Yaoundé, June 2011
57 Deltombe (2011), p.225

in order to achieve independence on its own terms. In reality the few pockets of resistance that existed until 1970 provided Ahidjo with a justification to concentrate power in his hands.

In the people's perception soldiers both black and white fighting against the UPC represented a threat to their livelihood. In fact Chadian *tirailleurs* and Cameroonian infantry, under French command committed many atrocities against the Cameroonian population who could hardly differentiate foreign fighters from those declared Cameroonian regular forces. According to Professor Sindjoun Pokam, the

> Cameroonian armed force constituted the negation of a force contributing to liberation [….] its historical mission has been to search and destroy nationalism and patriotism embodied by Ruben Um Niobè, and others.[58]

The legitimacy of the FAC thus was hampered from the beginning. As the outcome, however, it was the Cameroonian regular army that had prevailed.

2.3 State and Military-creation: Ahidjo's Neo-colonial Course

The *Forces armées camerounaises* (FAC) had already been waging civil war against the UPC for some years when the state became independent. Gradually developed under the surveillance of its French creators, they became the most important means of regime stability.[59]

State-building and military-building had to be performed by fulfilling two tasks that were difficult to align: by winning the quest for legitimacy internally and externally; and simultaneously by denying the same achievement to other

58 Sindjoun Pokam (2002), *Guerre de libération, destin historique des empires coloniaux et armée nationale en Afrique noire*, Impact Tribune, 20, quoted in Touwa (2007), p.111, author's translation

59 This was even facilitated by the support the UPC had desperately requested from communist states. Chinese sub-machine guns and explosives were the best the rebels ever had in terms of equipment

Cameroonians. By 1958, Um Niobè's physical elimination created the technical preconditions for the political forces aligned with the French (around future President Ahidjo) to eradicate conflicting claims to legitimacy, even if outbursts of UPC violence kept occurring until the mid-1970s.

Internally, however, state-building made only slow progress. Once in power President Ahidjo centralised the political structure of the state to achieve what Jean-François Bayart described as his 'hegemonic project' via complete control of all levers of power.[60] The federative constitution of 1961, necessary to merge English-speaking Cameroon with larger Francophone Cameroon, was quickly abandoned and replaced by a centralist one. President Ahidjo industriously used this central power to create supportive networks in the new provinces in order to put his political base on a larger footing.

Some impulses for state-building came from the military, especially from General Pierre Semengue. Congruent with his education and French acculturation he advocated making the army the focal point of nation-building.[61] At various times he suggested that Ahidjo introduce general conscription in order to forge a united people, proposing three years of compulsory service. That service would be separated into a smaller military branch and a larger civil branch, including afforestation and agricultural works. However, President Ahidjo was not inclined to pursue the development of a more directly-ruled state through stricter control of the whole country, as this would have alienated the powerful feudal lords in Northern Cameroon.[62] *Ordonnance 59/57* of 11 November 1959, generating the Cameroonian armed forces, does include the term 'general conscription', but this is primarily due to

60 Bayart (1979), p.238

61 General Semengue recalled that at the time of the formation of the armed forces his political ideals were embossed by his education as young man at the Lycée Général Leclerc and by his subsequent training in the French armed forces, Ateba Eyenne, Charles (2002), Le général Pierre Semengue: Toue une vie dans les armées, Edition CLE, Yaoundé, p.31

62 Interview with General Semengue, and interview Ca 8 with Professor Mathias Owona Nguini

the fact that it was cut and pasted from the French model, without further scrutiny of the applicability of the content.[63]

For legitimacy reasons, however, at least until the nationalist insurgency was entirely subdued, the President was keen on propagating the concept of the people's defence, because 'the army alone could not shoulder such a task'.[64] The army was supposed to be only a military vanguard supported by the nation in arms. However, apart from a few phony civil militias, this was never implemented.

Paragraph V of law no. 69 of 12 June 1967 defined the means available for the defence of the country as divided between two forces, first, the regular forces (*les Forces régulières*), composed of *fonctionnaires en armes* – a term which in its literal sense means 'civil servants in arms'[65] – and, secondly, 'auxiliary forces', whose recruitment conditions, missions, organisation, administration, guardianship, and employment were to be determined by Presidential decree.[66] Such a decree, however, was never issued, and its implementation never materialised. When Ahidjo repeated the slogan of the people's army during the 10th promotion of Cameroonian officers, stating that 'our defence must be national, with everyone participating because a united people are invincible', this policy had in reality been given up.[67] Over time the people's defence disappeared from the discourse. Instead, as of the early 1970s, after the rebellion's defeat, the concept of the 'army of development'

63 See Ntuda Ebodé, Jean Vincent (2011), *Politique de défense du Cameroun: évolution du concept d'emploi des forces et perspectives*, Revue de Défense Nationale, 1-4

64 Speech of President Ahidjo on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of independence, see Ahidjo, Ahmadou (1973), Recueil des discours presidentiels de 1968 à 1973, Secrétariat de l'Assemblée nationale de la République unie du Cameroun, Yaoundé

65 Actually pointing towards the role of soldiers as servants of the state

66 Journal Officiel de la République du Cameroun (1967), Yaoundé, Loi n°67/LF/9 du 12 juin 1967, *Définition des moyens de défense - de la loi portant organisation générale de la défense*

67 Ministère des Forces Armées Camerounaises (1980), np

was widely popularised as the new basis of military legitimacy.[68] By that time, there was no competing claim regarding what constituted the legitimate armed forces.

An important reason for the image of the Cameroonian forces as a coherent military body during the first phase of their existence was the consistency of the same small group of officers commanding the armed forces at the very top over several decades. However, the army suffered from a number of weaknesses. Firstly, like in the civilian part of the bureaucracy, over time President Ahmadou Ahidjo had positioned the clientele from his Northern home region in the military apparatus: the closer to the President the more likely one was to find Northerners in place. The composition of his Republican Guard was an excellent indicator of this policy. Only the supreme military commanders, who were once chosen by France, kept their position no matter their geographical origins. As it appears, the clientele structure continued to function in both vertical directions from Ahidjo, downwards to the Cameroonian clientele and upwards to Jacques Foccart, De Gaulle's man on the spot.[69] Secondly, at the head of an authoritarian regime preoccupied with maintaining internal order, Ahidjo kept close control over the security forces. In order to maintain a tight rein over the army, between 1973 and his departure from power in 1982, he made sure that it had only one general. The ministry of defence and other key positions were filled with people from his own region. Military training centres were established in the north and the west, far removed from the official power centre. Throughout the period the country was closely tied to France, whose strong presence included the technical military

68 Already in 1967 the key mission of the army was defined as including production (forestière, artisanale, artistique et culturelle), military and civil infrastructure, education, public health and affairs socials, see Ministère des Forces Armées Camerounaises (1980), np

69 Deltombe (2011), p.522

assistance agreement.[70] Thirdly, the President was well aware of the fact that the armed forces would not be strong enough to fight a new counterinsurgency war on their own and that the previous low-intensity but long lasting war had caused an estimated 300,000 victims. As a result of a combination of these conditions, the identification of the people with their army was non-existent at least for the period from 1960 to 1984. Efforts to fill this void by propaganda failed. The FAC of the first 25 years remained a neo-colonial quasi-army at the service of *Françafrique* and Ahmadou Ahidjo's cliques.

2.4 1982-84: Change of the Guard

In 1982 the first, and so far only, change of head of state of Cameroon took place. Paul Biya's advent to power was the start of a process of differentiation and sophistication of power management, which culminated in placing the president in an uncontested position as supreme patron of the land. The definitive turn did not come immediately, but after the attempted *coup d'état* of 6 April 1984. Until then, Biya had only been consolidating his power with difficulty, as he hardly had the confidence of the French, who had very much underestimated the intellectual capacity and resilience of this career bureaucrat. Similarly, many Cameroonian political leaders had regarded him as a mere placeholder until they had settled their own internal negotiations for power.[71] The coup unveiled the real Biya, as he used the event as a stepping stone to consolidate a reign of more than 30 years (so far).

The official narrative of the *coup d'état* of 6 April 1984 goes that members of the Presidential guard from the formerly privileged home region of President Ahidjo would have attempted to turn back the wheel from Biya's takeover to a return of Ahidjo. Those officers were reportedly worried about a prospective

70 All French African military cooperation agreements remained secret until 2008, when they were gradually renegotiated and made public

71 Pigeaud, Fanny (2011), Au Cameroun de Paul Biya, Karthala, Paris, pp.26ff

loss of the privileges they had become accustomed to over two decades, as their comparative advantage – representing Ahidjo's clientele from his home region – had lost its attraction to the new president. Based on their *Weltanschauung* oriented at patrimonial power structures, they interpreted Paul Biya's project of diversification of recruitment in the armed forces as an attempt to re-tribalise of the army and the state to the benefit of the new president's own people, the Béti.

Whether the President had a hand in the attempted coup himself or not, there is little doubt that it came as an opportunity for him to strengthen his own position in the direct follow-up to the events. General Semengue has indicated that he had received early warning of the putsch and reported them to Paul Biya. However, the President remained noticeably unimpressed, seemingly preferring things to go ahead.[72]

Following the coup, there were no mass executions, nor comparable bloodshed. Some purges against '*Ahidjoïstes*' did take place and, for a brief moment, it looked like the response was going to be a changing of the guards along the line of a typical Central African 'winner takes all' political culture. However, Biya's patrimonialism actually aimed at higher, more comprehensive goals. At the level of the elites, many of the former coup leaders and sympathisers were integrated into the armed forces and into the president's clientele circle. Correspondingly, at the lower level, Biya set out to expand his power outreach by a massive job creation programme in the civil service: between 1982 and 1988 the number of civil servants increased from 80,000 to

72 Interview with Semengue; However, only a few claims go as far as those by the former head of the secret services of Cameroon, indicating that the coup was entirely orchestrated by President Biya himself, see Fenkam, Frédéric (2003), Les rélévations de Jean Fochivé, Editions Minsi, Paris, chapter seven, and Mouiche (2005)

180,000 and recruits were drawn from all ethnic groups and regions.[73] Although Cameroon's balance of payments was experiencing severe disequilibria at the time as a consequence of a serious economic crisis, the president was able to maintain and widen his position as a redistributor of wealth thanks to generous international credits – secured with the help of the French.[74]

2.5 Estrangement from the French

At the time of Biya's power takeover (1982), although Cameroonian officers had assumed the vast majority of command posts from their foreign 'advisors', the direct influence of France on the army continued to be strong. The 1984 coup attempt marked the moment when French direct involvement lost its exceptional hold, even if some important influence could be maintained.[75] Ambiguity ruled Paul Biya's perception of French support. On the one hand he would not abandon the necessary backing of the former colonial power; on the other his developing paranoia of coups eventually included France in potential threats. Mutual mistrust and opacity increased in spite of continued French-Cameroonian defence treaties. As an outcome of this gradual alienation, France started to accuse Biya of all that went wrong with the development of the Cameroonian army. French dispositions played their role in the quarrel, as did Paul Biya's political preferences.

As a result, a strategy of diversification of foreign military support, already tentatively launched by Ahidjo, was then pursued more steadily. French

73 Biya's first decision was to increase all salaries by 16 per cent. A move that made him an attractive future patron; on civil servant numbers, see Pigeaud (2011), p.43

74 Even between 1988 and 1989, when the IMF insisted in fighting debts, Biya managed to dismiss bureaucrats in order to favour his creditors, but then secretly recruited the same people back to office the next day, see Van de Walle, Nicolas (1993), *The Politics of Nonreform in Cameroon*, in Callaghy, Thomas M. and Ravenhill, John, Hemmed In: responses to Africa's Economic Decline Columbia University Press, New York, foreign support to Cameroon jumped from $175 million in 1991 to $407 million in 1992; in 1993 and 1994 France repaid Cameroon's debts to the IMF, see Pigeaud (2011)

75 Interview Ca 3 at the Ecole militaire interarmées, Yaoundé, June 2012

supremacy gradually fell. American, German, Israeli, and Chinese advisers and arms traders became increasingly important. Significantly, after the 1984 coup, the French-trained Republican Guard was dissolved, and Israel was contracted to create a Presidential Guard (GP). This political move was actually visible because the FAC don French style uniforms, whilst the GP has an Israeli outfit.

2.6 The Cameroonian Army's 'Golden Age'

Like its Congolese counterpart, the Cameroonian army had its 'Golden Age', at least if looked at through the mitigating lenses of nostalgic retrospection. For Cameroon this was the period from the early 1980s until the advent of the democratisation movement after the end of the Cold War. During this period, when the armed forces remained very much in isolation from the population and away from political infringement, Cameroon was one of the few countries in the sub-region in which the armed forces protected the regime against an attempted *coup d'état* rather than committing one themselves.

The French favourable assessment of the Cameroonian army labelling it a professionally trained military body, at least for the period of overwhelmingly French influence until about 1986, probably reflects some degree of French military self-adulation. Accordingly, the FAC is judged in retrospection, for the period of French uncontested domination, as a republican force, invariably loyal to the constitution. This positive view on the FAC 'Golden Age' is supported by General Semengue's assessment, who stresses the fact that the 1980's army was more operational than it is at present.[76]

Much of the qualitative demise attributed to the FAC after about 1986 is with little doubt due to the mass pull-out of French officers from command posts in 1984 and 1986. However, French officers still held administrative

76 Interview with Semengue

power and positions of technical assistance, comparable to the Belgian *parrains* during the same era in the Congo, and they still maintain some at the time of writing those lines in 2013.

Further changes, however, may have contributed to blurring the image of the FAC. First, within, its recruitment base broadened and diversified over time. In a step to move away from the tribal affiliation of soldiers, students were recruited on merit as of 1986 – a move based on the notion that intelligent people will think twice about the consequences of insubordination before they execute orders by would-be putschist superiors.[77] According to another source, however, the first decade of the 21st century saw some loss in sophistication regarding recruitment: for example, the only distinctive feature to join the guards in 2012 is perfect marksmanship.

Second, the role of the FAC has been to some extent depreciated by the gradual creation of other types of better-endowed, better trained and fully loyal security forces. A first step in this direction was the creation, after the coup, of the new GP, trained by the Israelis. The Guards had limited privileges, but still significant ones compared to the standard of living of ordinary soldiers: a better diet (*on mange bien*), and improved housing came with a monthly gratification of 30,000 Fcfa.[78] From the start the GP would be subject to constant rotation from and into the army. Just like with any other privileged positions this rotation does not occur according to a predictable pattern.

2.7 The Cameroonian 'Breeze of Change'

The democratisation process of the early 1990s in Cameroon was, as elsewhere, a consequence of the 'breeze of change' coming from Eastern Europe. However it also had domestic roots. The late 1980s had seen the

77 Interview Ca 11 with Colonel II, Cameroon army, Libreville, 2011

78 About 36 £, figures for 2012, interview Ca 12 with Colonel III Cameroon army, Douala, April 2011

economic crisis deepen, making it difficult for the regime to maintain its patronage system at a constant level, despite consequent external support. The people of the North, accustomed to feudal settings, were seeing the benefits of redistribution dwindle, whilst many in the South, including soldiers, had come to the conclusion that their tribal pedigree (shared ethnic origin with the President's clan) was not sufficient to ensure a certain position and social security. As the same time as the people expressed discontent, however, they started adapting to the more difficult conditions. Following the example of their patron-in-chief, they begun diversifying their social and economic networks as a tool to spread risks and benefits. This, as will be explained below, also applied to the military.

The push for democratisation did not generate challenging pressures to Biya's rule, even if Mitterrand's famous speech at La Baule had raised expectations among observers.[79] Rather, the drive for pluralism and diversification could effortlessly be canalised by the leadership into an atomisation of all powers jeopardizing its domination. The atomisation of political opposition was facilitated by the Cameroonian political culture, regardless of the introduction of a pluralistic multi-party system. The Cameroonian hierarchical system serves as a frame of reference for oppositional politicians as much as for those in charge. It corresponds to a limited-access order in a closed society configuration. At the same time as it cajoles, this system is also threatening as the political opposition is systematically presented as the enemy of the people by a state apparatus that pretends to incarnate the nation. As a result, an atomised opposition possibly representing a majority of the people gathers in the shadow of the all-powerful.

79 June 1990, accordingly 'old friend' African regimes, if repressive or inefficient, could no longer count on French support, see Bayart, Jean F (1990), *France-Afrique, la fin du pacte colonial*, Politique Africaine, 39, September, 47-53

The new parties, as Nicolas van de Walle has demonstrated, were sectarian, in ethnic terms, and hardly provide ideological or programmatic debates. Rather they displayed the 'illiberal nature of most of the new African democracies', in which the monarchist-presidentialist character of the hierarchy shapes all individual behaviour and political organisations.[80] It is this character of the political intercourse that enabled Paul Biya to maintain his pivotal position in a seemingly pluralistic political environment. Incorporation of opposition leaders in Biya's patronage network was thus an efficient tool to undermine oppositional movements.

The 1992 parliamentary and Presidential elections marked the end of one-party rule (since 1966), but fraudulent conduct and a boycott by a main opposition party kept Biya in power. Even if the new parliament had 90 oppositional members, including the old UPC with 18 seats, Biya managed to draw a good number of parliamentarians to his camp.[81] How fragile the institutions were, however, was demonstrated during an episode in 2004, when rumours of Paul Biya's death spread. Instead of organising to ensure the continuity of state affairs, parliamentarians and other administrators rushed back at once to their individual relatively secure power bases to await the outcome of the expected infighting for succession.[82]

In a context of continuing civil unrest (violent street protests occurred through the early 1990s) and rising external threats (from Nigeria) Paul Biya could not afford to atomise the security forces in the same way as he had handled the political forces. Neither did he want to strengthen this key pillar of

80 See Van de Walle, Nicolas (2003), *Presidentialism and Clientelism in Africa's Emerging Party Systems*, The Journal of Modern African Studies, 41, 2, 297-321

81 See Takougang, Joseph (1997), *Cameroon: Biya and Incremental Reform*, in Clark, John Frank and Gardinier, David E, Political Reform in Francophone Africa Westview Press, Boulder, 162-181

82 Interview Ca 10 with Jean-Bosco Ntala, editor Germinal Magazin, Yaounde, 2010; see also Chia, Innocent (2008), *President Paul Biya of Cameroon is not dead – What Difference Does it make?*, The Cia Report, 1 November

the state structure at the expense of the patronage system.[83] The President could have followed the example of Mobutu's Zaire – by preserving a small but sufficient number of Special Forces isolated directly under his own control, which would have been able to perform limited domestic and external military operations. However, unlike Mobutu, Biya did not want to overdo the weakening of the security sector. In much more densely populated Cameroon a dispersal of the armed forces would not have had the same result as in the Congo. Possible violent repercussions from unpaid salaries or other grievances would also more easily have threatened the government. Biya feared a completely de-professionalised armed mob, from which alternative, potentially dangerous, power structures could emerge. His solution was as follows: in difficult economic situations the army would keep receiving its payment, but room for alternative incomes would be tolerated. At the same time a few highly specialized combat units would be enabled to do the hard fighting. They would, however, remain insulated from the military chain of command.

During the oppositional 'ghost town' operations of the mid-1990s widespread violence and looting was brutally suppressed by security forces. Some sources claim that the military was deployed and committed atrocities, but such accusations have so far not been supported by concrete data or witnesses.[84] However, even if no distinguishable army units were deployed, so-called Operational Command units subdued most of the upheaval that the police was unable to cope with. These dubious Operational Command units

83 As demonstrated by Atul Kohli, state-weakening measures, if driven too far, they can result in the self-inflicted political impotence of a leader, see Kohli, Atul (1997), *Centralization and Powerlessness in India*, in Migdal, Joel S, et al., State Power and Social Forces, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 89-107, p.92

84 See for example Banseka, Cage (2005), *The 'Anti-Gang' Civil Militias in Cameroon and the Threat to National and Human Security*, in Francis, David J, Civil Militia: Africa's intractable security menace? Ashgate, Aldershot and Burlington, VT, pp.165ff; Mbapndah Ajong, Laurean (n.y.), *Cameroon: Democracy at the Crossroads*, Peace and Conflict Monitor, pp.1-9

were again used in 2000 in riot control, and they were reported as having been set up to fight organised crime in the Littoral province.[85] Such units could be created ad hoc as 'temporary subordinated commandments' to be established '*par décret à la demande*'.[86]

By contrast, even during the turmoil of the political crisis between 1990 and 1996 the armed forces were mostly restricted to their representative role. If fighting had to be done, this was executed by small battalion-level special forces. On 21 December 1993 2-3,000 Nigerian troops took the initiative for the first time to infringe on the boundary passing through the Bakassi peninsula under the pretext of defending their territory.[87] An estimated 40 Cameroonian naval soldiers and a handful gendarmerie had to withdraw to Idabato. In 1996 the Nigerian advanced farther under the protection of heavy arms up to about 25 kilometres into Cameroon.[88] The Nigerian soldiers deployed did not exceed 3,000 troops at any given time. Even at this limited level of external military threat, the army could not cope and two portions of Cameroonian territory (Bakassi and Darak, in the Lake Chad area) were occupied by Nigerian troops until an UN-mediated settlement resulted in their final withdrawal in 2008).

2.8 De-forming the Armed Forces

During the evolving confrontation with Nigeria it became apparent that limited military threats needed a matching response in order to avoid an

85 Human Rights Watch (1992), World Report 1992: Cameroon, np; claims from an interview with the prestigious journal Jeune Afrique Economique in September 2002, by Cardinal Tumi, that half a million Cameroonians had been executed by Operational Command in the course of such events have no empirical backing, see Guichi, Marie Noelle (2001), Execution of Cameroonian Youths Provokes Demonstrations publisher

86 According to decree 73/313 of 21 June 1973

87 Messinga, Ernest Claude (2007), Les Forces Armées camerounaises faces aux enjeux militaires dans le Golfe de Guinée : le cas du conflit Armée de Bakassi, Mémoire de D.E.A., Law and Political Science Department, Université de Yaoundé II SOA, p.66

88 According to one source the Nigerian side seems to have taken the opportunity to rotate as many soldiers as possible into the frontline. They changed the units every other week, whilst the Cameroonian units stayed in place for three months each. Afterwards, they spent two weeks for training by French officers in Limbe (South Cameroon), plus two weeks recovery. Each unit deployed made three tours per year, over a stretch of two years, Interview Ca 13 with Bakassi navy veteran Adjutant I, Yaoundé, July 2012

escalation and not to provoke all-out war, which was considered more of a threat to the regime than, for example, the quickly contained political pluralism. Since the conventional armed forces were at no time considered capable to confront a foreign army, the *Bataillon Léger d'Intervention* (BLI) was created in January 1999. This move would allow the authorities to respond successfully to a threat at battalion level. Officially the BLI was described as the armed forces' module to face newly emerging asymmetric military threats, like large scale organised road robbery (*grand banditisme*) in the North of Cameroon. Through Presidential decree 2001/183 of 25 July 2001[89] the BLI became the *Bataillon d'Intervention Rapide* (BIR), with one full battalion in each of the three military regions.[90] For the Southern region, the so-called BIR Delta would be tasked with fighting piracy in the Gulf of Guinea, but its operational target was primarily the control of the Bakassi peninsula, to deter further Nigerian ambitions. BIR units are now to be found throughout the entire Cameroonian territory, represented by nine additional BIR, including BIR Delta, the *Bataillon Spécial Amphibie* (BSA), one airborne BIR, a *Centre d'Instruction des BIR*, the *Centre Antiterroriste*, and a logistic base of the BIR.[91] Domestically the military is deployed against violent domestic uprisings only in the form of occasional ad hoc 'operational commandoes' of the regular army, unimpressive compared to the parallel BIR deployment. In the semi-official Cameroonian press, the BIR is hailed as having permitted the judiciary to chase 'evil doers, and to re-establish

89 Published the following day in Cameroon Tribune

90 Three military regions were established during the latest army reform attempt by the French General Raymond Germanos in 2001. The gendarmerie has established its own BIR called GPIGN, *Groupement Polyvalent d'Intervention de la Gendarmerie Nationale*, interview Ca 13 Adjudant I, Yaoundé, July 2012

91 Nkoa Atenga, Camille (2005), *Army in the Mood of Change*, Honneur et Fidélité Magazine des Forces Armées, special edition, pp.20f (Nkoa is at the time of writing chief of staff the land armed forces)

peace on the entire national territory'.[92] Few, if any, oppressive operations are executed by the army.

3 Patronage as Social Contract

No more than its Congolese counterpart can the Cameroonian military be understood if it is not placed in the context of the political culture in which it evolves. As others in Central Africa, the Cameroonian political culture is based on a patronage system, but it is marked by local features linked to the country's distinctive type of political leadership, the particular complexity of its patronage networks, and a deep infusion with mystical traditions.

3.1 The Ahidjo Heritage

In societies where literacy is limited, *griots*, the traditional singer-poets, preserve political and social history. *Griots* are living libraries. They deliver the interpretation of political events and are thus vital to their audience's perception of historical events. At the time of transition to independence, upon becoming the prime minister of semi-autonomous Cameroon, Ahmadou Ahidjo was characterised by the *griots* as *nouveau patron de toutes et de tous*, the new patron of everything and everybody.[93] Ahidjo had obtained the power from France, said the *griots*, 'He came from Paris, passed through Douala; and went to Yaoundé.'[94] One of them, Bello Dow Keerol, sang, 'Ahmadou Ahidjo […] our white governor – he now has the power of France.'[95] As summarised by Prof. Saibou Issa, the new political class was perceived as mimicking the former white rulers, with Ahidjo, the *tout-puissant*, the all-powerful, in the words of the *griot*, heading them, stepping in his predecessors' shoes. To avoid any

92 Cameroon Tribune, 20 February 2009

93 See Saibou Issa (2009), *La transition du pouvoir colonial et la naissance de l'administration territoriale au Nord-Cameroun*, Kaliao, revue interdisciplinaire de l'E.N.S. de Maroua, 1, 1, Maroua

94 Ibid. p.60

95 Quoted in Ibid. p.60

misunderstanding, the incoming rulers ensured that the new allocation of might was accompanied by powerful symbols reflected in the size of palaces and villas, and even more so in the strict allocation of cars. Thus the Prime minister would own an American Pontiac with twin V-shaped fins; his ministers were assigned *Frégate amirale*, the Paris-typical taxi of the epoch; directors would still have the less sophisticated *Frégate*; and everyone below drove a Citroën 2CV '*Deux cheveaux*'.[96] The transition had changed the *commandant* for the *Coumanda*.

Having centralised the state by the re-unification of the two Cameroons under the protection of the French, Ahidjo set out to broaden his power base on the basis of extended patronage networks. According to Etonga, 'These networks were based on a patronage system that allowed him to control and distribute the resources of the state.'[97] And Takougang and Krieger observe:

> Those who received important positions within the party or in the administration were not only able to exploit those positions for their personal gains, but were also able to build clienteles for themselves and for the President through employment opportunities and by providing other social and economic benefits for their clients. The President was thus able to create an extensive patron-client network that transcended various social, ethnic, and regional groups. [98]

Paul Biya inherited this system upon taking power in 1982 and set out to perfect it in his own style. He was helped in this by the increase in revenue

96 Abwa, Daniel (1998), Commissaires et Hauts-Commissaires de la France au Cameroun 1916-1960, Presses universitaires de Yaoundé, Yaoundé, p.401

97 Etonga, Mbu (1980), *An Imperial Presidency: A Study of Presidential Power in Cameroon*, in Kofele-Kale, Ndiva, An African Experiment in Nation Building: The Bilingual Cameroon Republic Since Reunification Westview Press, Boulder, p.142

98 Takougang, Joseph and Milton Krieger (1998), African State and Society in the 1990s Cameroon's Political Crossroads, Westview Press, Boulder, pp.52f

from the (relatively) newly integrated Anglophone zone's petroleum which was kept out of the national budget and used in a discretionary manner to fuel a wide swath of public enterprises, development projects, and 'a 'high politics' of patronage sufficient to attract and hold the loyalty of its beneficiaries and their clients'.[99]

3.2 Ruling via Uncertainty: The *Führerprinzip*

Combining irony with frustration, Cameroonians joke about their president's 'official state visits to Cameroon', when he is in the country. Taking into account the fact that most of the military coups on the African continent after the initial post-colonial decade have been performed during the absence of the incumbent leader,[100] the time spent abroad by the head of state can be taken as an indicator of the stability of his regime.[101]

President Biya epitomises the state to a degree that allows comparison to Louis XIV. However, his power is not an absolutist one depending on coercion alone. Rather, his subjects, a majority of them born after he took power, demonstrate an anticipatory, pro-active form of obedience. In a way, the system is analogous to Adolf Hitler's *Führerprinzip*, in which the leader lets his inferior clientele fight out their interests, and then has the last word without involvement in internal rivalries. This principle applies in particular within the ruling party, the *Rassemblement démocratique du peuple camerounais* (RDPC), whose members try to negotiate their careers and policies according to what they anticipate as meeting the leader's intentions. The balance between positioning for power and not raising the incumbent's suspicion is difficult to sustain and backlashes can come suddenly, without explication. On

99 Wehler (1969) p.4
100 See Clark (2007)
101 President Biya spends most of his time at the Hotel InterContinental, Geneva

the other hand, they are rarely irrevocable.[102] The Cameroonian one-party rule as of 1966 is therefore quite different and much more sophisticated than the blunt instrument of power represented by Mobutu's single party MPR, instituted at the same period.

In the broader social context, patronage from the top functions on the same principle as a *paternoster* elevator. Every such elevator of opportunity will undoubtedly turn down after arrival at the top. Paul Biya's sophisticated system of binding people through a balance of uncertainty and hope is grounded in the experience that one cannot only be dismissed but also be promoted the very next day without any premonition. At the same time one cannot successfully play in all channels theoretically available. There is therefore little certainty about the best method to advance because the ultimate leadership systematically surprises with unexpected twists, and the speed up is identical with the speed downwards.[103] In this system, simple kinship is far from being a warranty for career: as one colonel said to this author, 'The President is my uncle, but that does not help me become general' – it may, however, have helped him to become a colonel.

In such a political context, public discourse retains a degree of freedom that can be measured by a relatively outspoken press. The only taboo is placed on criticism of the President himself and his wife. As long as people or newspapers blame 'the government', or air their discomfort though metaphors, discourse is possible. Addressing widespread corruption, for instance, may be done by criticising the national football organisation, whereby the national coach or the responsible minister, both traditionally mired in corruption

102 ICG (2010b); the impression of a number of observers that the ruling party is 'increasingly divided' may be attributed to the fact that some see President Biya's rule as coming to a close soon, leaving the party as the main battleground for succession

103 Ministers sometime learn about their appointments from the newspapers. Given the rare presence of Biya in the country, the high turnover of ministers has prevented some from even meeting him during their tenure, see Pigeaud (2011), p.64

scandals, stand for the President and his cronies, the management's disappointing performance for the administration, and the suffering team for the people.

3.3 The Cameroonian Patronage System: An Ever Reshaping Web

The Cameroonian social contract materialises mostly in an informal shape, namely in the guise of multiple informal networks thriving under the cover of official organisations. The party, the security forces, the churches, the universities, and public works enterprises are the many hosts for those networks, feeding on a diversified pool of economic resources including taxes, charges of all kinds, national and international trade, and production revenues, etc., in a context in which there are few transparent channels to access positions or contracts, and every individual is permanently on the lookout for alternative roads to wealth or at least a better life.

The state apparatus, both at the local and the central levels, is the most powerful of the network hosts, making access to its ranks particularly sought after in the search for *positions d'argent* or sinecures.[104] For this reason, every network ultimately points up to the same central power, the presidency. In a pattern typical of limited access orders, the semi-closed Cameroonian society creates economic rents through privileged access to political influence, and then uses these rents to sustain the political order via a patronage scaffolding holding it together. Accesses to rents remains ultimately at the grace of Paul Biya, but before it comes to decision applicants have to perform in a competitive and highly differentiated system of intermediate level screening.

In such a system no individual wants to rely on a single clientele system. Being a soldier, for instance, does not mean that one does not take part in

104 Sinecure is used here in its pre-modern sense of clientelism: a non-permanent position or office that requires little or no work but provides a salary.

elevage or farming. Being a University teacher does not mean that one does not develop economic ties with soldiers who command certain military budgets. Similarly, to obtain a military promotion, a number of payments are due, which will be difficult to generate without an external source of revenue; and in turn, to assure a place for one's son or a client at a prestigious military school, contacts via the church or the political party may be decisive. The former German Democratic Republic is perhaps the best example of a similar system where the bureaucracy, the armed forces, public enterprises, and a little private economy come together as a network of providers of wealth and goods at different levels.

Clientele systems are an evolving web and there are also 'fashions' in what helps one work up the patronage ladder. For example, for some time a university degree ensured relatively quick access to a guaranteed basic salary. This is no longer the case: although any graduate is still entitled to a post, this no longer necessarily comes with a secured income. For an academic career, especially one with access to a *poste d'argent* (position with potential access to personal gain) at the university, however, the stand within the political party can be decisive.[105] Membership in certain secret associations, such as Rosicrucians and Freemasons, may be helpful or prohibitive depending on the situation. The informality of clientele networks goes beyond membership in pseudo-organisations: at the time of the field research in Cameroon in 2010 and 2011 interviewees from independent (non-related) backgrounds credibly reported that men applying for work at the public energy company, or a large mobile phone company, had to be homosexual.[106]

105 Interview (anonymised) with an alumni of Yaoundé University with a degree in international relations who had not received his salary for the first six months of his employment at a ministry non-related to his expertise

106 The concealed question was whether they were 'bilingual' in the right manner, aiming at sexual preferences. This phenomenon was widely discussed in the press as a matter

Overall, clientele systems today are much more intricate than during the early years of independence. The old North-South divide is still relevant but decreasing in importance. With the advent of a multi-party system and social diversification, a multiplicity of sub-clientele systems and horizontal networks has developed, fed from the top and the bottom at the same time, leading to the constant rearrangement of paths of advancement. Alternative channels compete with one another at the same time as the actors within may use them simultaneously as parallel paths of advancement as part of a personal risk management strategy. This is also a way to protect themselves against the downward spirals of the 'staircases of advancement' described above.

The Cameroonian clientele system has developed on the scaffolding of a political culture that is as stringently hierarchical as in the rest of Central Africa, but much more conflict-averse than is typical for the sub-region.[107] Under an apparent calm and Fabian surface, internal divisions due to the discrepancies between the feudal North and the more modernised South, tensions among social layers, and the inequities between the people and predatory elites, all impact on the social fabric.[108] In this context, the patronage system appears to work as conflict management and conflict mitigation tools in the hands of the elites. As a result, the bureaucratic apparatus of the state, as an important rung of this system, does not have the same function as in conventional directly-ruled states in the Western or Chinese traditions. Rather, in a quasi-state such as Cameroon, where the bargain between the subjects and the lord had never happened,[109] the quasi-state façade represented by the administration does not function as a conveyor belt between the nation and the legislator or the

of grievance, naming the fifty most important homosexual persons, Nkongo, Alain Bertrand (2012), Homosexualité: Le double langage du Gouvernement, Cameroon Info-net

107 Together with neighbouring Gabon, Cameroon has never suffered a military take-over or other violent political transformation linked to the intra-elite power struggle, although both experienced coup attempts (Gabon in 1964, Cameroon in 1982)

108 Bachiri and Balibutsa (2005), pp.3ff

109 As theorised by David Leonard date, see chapter two, section 3.2

executive, but as a series of political dashpots cushioning the impact of social conflicts within the indirect rule order. In the Cameroonian context of deep but subdued structural violence, the patronage of a big man still appears as the best insurance.

3.4 Beyond State Power: Witchcraft

Sorcellerie (witchcraft) is another characteristic of Cameroonian political culture – as it is in most Central African societies. Witchcraft is important as it pervades daily individual beliefs and behaviour, leading to actions which, from a Western perspective, may seem 'irrational'. For example, an officer or an official taking an important position will eradicate any leftovers from the office of its predecessor, up to the curtains and wall paint, in order to stamp out any evil force that may have been left lingering around.[110] Witchcraft is also important because it implies the existence of supra-natural forces, the power of which goes beyond the control of the state. If the power of the state to reign may be conceded during daylight, other forces are believed to dominate the realm of the night, and the state is not considered to have the ability to tackle witchcraft head-on.[111] Witchcraft acts as a constraint on action, as everyone everywhere – and particularly individuals in high-ranking positions – feels under the permanent threat of falling prey to an act of sorcery mandated by an enemy, but also as an instrument of control in the hands of the powerful who can, precisely, call upon the services of *nganga* (sorcerers) to threaten their adversaries. The president himself, as well as his ministers, are said to have their own advisers on occult techniques, and even the football team travels with twelve Marabouts![112]

110 Interview Ca 3 with foreign military advisor, Cameroon, April 2011
111 Geschiere (1993), p.333
112 Pigeaud (2011), p.110

Widespread belief in witchcraft makes it a useful tool to steer or prevent political action. For example, one wonders whether the wide rumours about witchcraft related to a decade long series of fires in the offices of high military and defence officials in the 2000s may not simply be a way to prevent investigation in corruption or other cases by destroying evidence in a non-attributable manner.[113]

According to relevant research[114] and interviews[115] witchcraft had a renaissance with the democratisation movement of the early 1990s and official campaigns to eradicate it – or at least mitigate its most extreme forms – have had rather the opposite effect as they have exposed the popular obsession with the phenomenon. On the political front, many people believe, for example, that President Biya must have employed witchcraft to remain in power, using stronger sorcerers than opposition groups tried to employ against him. This in turn strengthened the president's position as the foremost patron, both of the state and the informal world beyond.

4 The Military in the Cameroonian State Order

The state of the Cameroonian armed forces 50 years after independence is a product of the country's history and its political culture. The outcome is a particular form of 'quasi-army' characterised by a deep immersion in national patronage and corruption networks, a lack of coherence in operational roles and capacity, and an ambiguous relationship with the citizenry.

113 In 2000 the records of Colonel (later brigadier) Bénaé Mpecke went up in flames. In 2001 and 2002 the cabinet du Mindef, the office of Laurent Esso at the MOD burned out. In 2008 in the so called 'Pentagon' building offices of General of the Army Semengue, general de corps d'armée Nganso Sundji, the Divisional Generals Tataw and Youmba, and of Brigadier General Songole caught fire

114 There is extensive research on sorcery by African academics, which is mostly ignored by their Western colleagues, see for instance Bachiri and Balibutsa (2005)

115 Interview Ca 14 with Prof. Balibutsa, Libreville 2010

4.1 Patronage and Corruption: A Contaminated Military

The Cameroonian armed forces are part and parcel of the quasi-state bureaucratic patronage network, both constituting a clientele system in their own right and also intersecting with the patronage networks operating in the civilian realm of the administration. In those networks, political elites and military elites overlap and the military is as little a monolithic institution as the 'state' is one. Quasi-state bureaucracy and military serve as the framework in which high-ranking officials pursue their individual interests, rather than institutional interests. Hence, the military is as much a tool of influence and resources management in the hands of the patrons dominating the state apparatus as an instrument of power projection of the state. In this system, military and civilian elites act in competition or cooperation across the networks, rather the military and the civilian bureaucracies competing against, or cooperating with one another.

In a context marked by the penetration of Cameroonian political culture by corruption,[116] the fact that the military-bureaucratic apparatus is the recipient and manager of a considerable part of the funds available to the nation makes it particular prone to contamination. At times officers can mobilise enough leverage to resist influence from internal or external informal networks.[117] According to the ranking of Transparency International for 2008 the Cameroonian army was in the third highest position pertaining to corruption within the administration.[118]

116 See Titi Nwel, Pierre (1999), Corruption in Cameroon, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Kamerun, Yaoundé; Titi Nwel, Pierre (2009), La lutte contre la corruption en Cameroun, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Kamerun, Yaoundé; in the national archives of Cameroon staff demanded a negotiated bribe for every document accessed – without providing a receipt

117 Interview Ca 8 with Owena Nguini, April 2011; in civilian as much as military bodies, when patrons see a vanishing of capacities among their own clients they would use all of the institutional means available to repel an external influx of claimant

118 It was the only year when the army was on this opinion pool's list to choose from and be ranked, Mbassi, Dominique and Marie Robert Eloundou (2008), *La corruption monte en*

4.1.1 The Roots of the Problem

Patronage in the Cameroonian military has its roots in early 1980s political developments but its generalisation and intertwining with corruption dates from the economic crisis of the ensuing decade. Political and financial factors have therefore combined in redefining the shape of the military away from professional criteria.

The 1984 attempted coup against President Biya altered the position of the security forces as, from that time onward, military control has been placed in the hands of a small circle of trusted men occupying key senior posts. This small circle comprises a few generals who came to, or remained in, their positions during the first transition from Mamadhou Ahidjo to Paul Biya and kept them until the early 2010s, has constituted the top rung of the military patronage system. The first of them to retire did so only in 2011, including General Semengue, Commander of the Cameroonian Armed Forces, as general of the army (5*) and General Tataw, the highest Anglophone military officer, as general of the division (3*).[119] All in all, the Cameroonian army had only 24 generals in its entire history and, in 2012, most of them were well beyond the legal retirement age of 65.[120] By the early 2010s certain of them owned forest concessions or plantations, headed private security companies or owned land rented out to multinationals.[121] Political control over the military and the distribution of favours to maintain it have been the responsibility and

grade, Germinal, 2, October/November, p.12; TI's relative comparison of countries put Cameroon in a range between places 134 out of 182 (2011) and 146 out of 178 (2010)

119 The other two were General de corps d'armée (4*) Oumaroudjam Yaya, Commander of the gendarmerie, and Rear admiral Guilaume Ngouah Ngally. The four of them were the first generals of the Cameroonian Armed Forces ever to retire

120 General Semengué was 76 when he retired in 2011. The limited number of generals is very much in contrast to Gabon, where the title 'General' is a purely political position, with two generals coming from each region – presently counting for 19 generals for the 2600-strong land armed forces

121 Information confirmed by several Cameroonian military in conversations in 2011 and 2012

the privilege of those few. A policy of promotion favouring the President's own ethnic group, the Béti, is said to have buttressed the system.[122]

The rules of the military clientele system started changing radically with the economic crisis in the early 1990s. Under pressure from international financial institutions and creditors to reduce public expenditures in order to juggle the country's ballooning debt, president Biya decided to remain loyal to his soldiers, partly because they had been loyal to him, and for fear of coups or armed rioting. Whereas average bureaucrats' salaries were decreased by 60 to 70 per cent in the early to mid1990s, the military remained unharmed and, as in 1994 the franc CFA was devalued by 50 per cent, the military were offered a way out by obtaining the authorisation to go into business – at least at the level of senior officers.[123] The Cameroonian *débrouille* was not as severe as under Mobutu, but it opened the floodgates of ubiquitous corruption.

4.1.2 Forms of Patronage and Corruption

There are three main levels of corruption in the security sector: first, large scale corruption linked to arms transfers, fuel acquisition, and the most profitable *postes d'argent;* secondly, the institutionalised corruption of mediocre *postes d'argent* at battalion level, which generally earn their beneficiaries small amounts of money over a long period of time; and, thirdly, petty corruption at the level of ordinary soldiers, which has only been developing very recently.

Senior officers of general rank are involved in large scale corruption, which implies handling enormous sums of money for arms acquisitions. The dangers of such deals came quickly enough to the attention of the political leadership, who realised the risk of dispossessing itself of control on major

122 Interview Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Yaoundé, April 2011

123 Pigeaud (2011), p.61; Takougang (1997), p.5; Blandford, David, et al. (1994), *Oil Boom and Bust: The Harsh Realities of Adjustment in Cameroon*, in Sahn, David, Adjusting to Policy Failure in African Economies Cornell University Press, Ihaca and London pp.147,155,157

pools of resources; and, as early as 1996, a reform of public tendering (*réforme du système de passation des marchés publics*) was introduced by placing a US$6,000 ceiling limit on any tender. These limitations, however, were quickly circumvented by strategies such as splitting orders into several smaller lots[124] and introducing as many 'points of sale' as possible for the payment of bribes in each contract. [125] Whilst such high level corruption is well-known, unearthing it is not easy and can be a risky business. According to an air-force colonel interviewed for a study by the Konrad-Adenauer-Foundation:

> Look at the contracts for the supply of arms, military hardware and equipment. You will be shocked if you were to try to look into this area. You will see, but after that you will be eliminated. Some of the most unscrupulous businessmen are found among our military bosses.[126]

High level corruption is fostered by the lack of transparency in the governance of public funds. Since training institutions, for example, have no distinct legal personality, it is impossible to separate funding allotted to them from funding allotted to the ministry.[127] Thus, 4/5 of a five billion FCFA grant (six million £) intended for the creation of a joint French/Cameroonian military academy project are reported to have gone directly and without receipt to the minister of defence. In another instance, from a one billion allotment for the equipment of forces deployed during the Bakassi crisis in 1996, a mere one

124 Aircraft, for instance, were ordered in parts, wings, engines; ships, which cannot be subdivided in different lots are not being ordered anymore; Interview Ca 16 French military adviser I, January 2012

125 'Points of sale' include for example: placing of purchase order; approval as contractor or supplier; the award of the contract; the signing of the contract; implementation of the contract; technical reception and delivery of supplies; or payment of bills or debit notes, see Titi Nwel (1999)

126 Ibid. p.54

127 See B&S Europe Report to the European Commission (2012), Assistance technique pour appuyer la CEEACdans la mise en place des conditions d'un soutien Europ éen aux centres de formation regionaux, non-published, Brussels, pp.80-89

million arrived on the ground, reflecting a similar confusion between the chain of command and the chain of payment as that encountered in the Congo. After this episode, French advisors reportedly offered to finance and install a software controlled personnel planning programme to control the flow of funds, but the machines were 'deliberately crashed' soon after installation, and never touched again.[128] In more convoluted schemes, the military administrative chain can be used as a channel for money laundering. Journalist Jean Bosco Talla reports that in 2004 an office chief of one brigadier general 'who meanwhile had passed away' asked his five staff to present their role number (*matricule*) without any further explanation. In the ensuing weeks money additional to their normal salaries in the range of 50,000 to 800,000 Fcfa arrived in their accounts. Soon after their office chief would demand his (lion's) share of the money. Not having the money ready meant punishment at the will of the sender and 'godfather'.[129]

It is at the intermediate level that corruption takes its most varied forms. It may include fraudulent salaries or pensions, ghost soldiers, fuel trade, commissions on arms and other equipment acquisition, trade in promotions and nominations, or bribing of commissions. Fraudulent disability pensions are apparently a favourite and relatively easy tool for officers, and at times civilian defence officials as well, to beef up their monthly income.[130] On the other hand, initial recruitments, success in internal competitions (concourse) for promotion,

128 Interview Ca 16 with a French military adviser I, January 2012

129 Interview Ca 10 with Talla, Yaoundé, April 2011

130 In 2009, Prof. Pius Ondoua Ondoua revealed to the Cameroonian press that one *battalion commander* (administrative title at the ministry of Defence) regularly received three pensions, two of which were false claims amounting to four million FCFA and a *maréchal de logis chef* (NCO ranking below adjudant) had received some 10 million FCFA. This seems to have been part of a scheme tailored to the needs of NCOs, with benefits cases ranging between seven million and above 14 million FCFA. Among the recipients were 48 per cent *sergeant* and *sergeant chef*, 22 per cent *adjudant* and *adjudant chef*, and 18 per cent civilian staff at the MoD. Only one *corporal chef*, and one *soldat première classe* were in the list. Interestingly, Prof. Ondoua, head of the philosophy department at Yaoundé 1 University, is a member of the ruling RDPC and his official CV includes Secretary of employment, labour, and providence (prévoyance) in the 1997 cabinet. This gives an idea of the complexity of inter-elite relations in Cameroun

and access to training opportunities seem to lend themselves to a particularly active trade.[131] Training abroad (*stages*), especially in France, is theoretically the outcome of a strict and objective selection process, but it is suspected of following its own rules, including a concern for the 'fair' distribution of favours, in a similar logic to that of the 'paternoster system' in civilian career-making. Posts abroad, such as defence attaché, in an international organisation, or in a peacekeeping mission are most of the time a way to be rewarded by one's patron, as confirmed by several interviewees.[132]

Not all *postes d'argent* are of similar quality in terms of income, though, and access to them is not necessarily a matter of rank. As one graduate of the *Ecole de guerre* explained to this author, there are only 30 places to fill each year at the prestigious school. With a bribe rate within the range of hundred thousand FCFA per aspirant, the harvest is rather mediocre for the director, especially as the post is usually limited to three years. The same post, however, can be a stepping stone for access to a better-endowed position.[133] Acquisition of petrol and fuel for the land armed forces, on the other hand, is a very lucrative post, occupied in 2011-2012 by a captain, eliciting some considerable jealousy from colonels who had not made it to a general position. Most NCOs, on their part, will derive their income from engagement in business activities aside from their military duties, rather than straightforward armed forces-related corruption. Several interviewees (corporal, adjutant-chef, captain) confirmed to this author that they were active as cattle raisers or farmers or in the import-export business, an activity tacitly facilitated by regular

131 Testimony of a retired *capitaine de vaisseau* (equivalent commodore/colonel) in ZAP Press, Yaoundé, 5 October 2008; this was also confirmed by one active officer during an interview Ca 11 with this author, Douala, April 2011

132 Ca 15 with Professor Fogué, April 2011, Yaoundé

133 According to Cours Supérieur Interarmées de Défense (CSID) staff, 90 per cent of the bribe money goes to the director. That the post is a stepping stone position is demonstrated by the fact that three of the recently promoted generals are earlier directors of the school

weekends off duty including Friday and Monday. The riches many of them have piled up, as testified by the interior of their houses, would be difficult to explain solely from their military income. Private agricultural enterprises were as freely listed by interviewees as 'side benefits' of purchases made in service of the army.

The third level of corruption, low level corruption, has developed only recently. With pressure increasing on low income households, simple soldiers have begun engaging in paltry corruption, such as using military cars and the deterrence created by their uniforms to start a new transport business; unchallenged by the ubiquitous roadblocks of police and gendarmerie, these soldiers offer taxi and transport services that pass by these taxing points. Military vans are also a safe and appreciated means of transportation in regions where road robbery is a significant problem.[134]

4.1.3 The Consequences

Two kinds of distortions have resulted from the perversion of the Cameroonian armed forces by patronage systems and business interests.

One has been a decrease in the proficiency of the military, to the regret of a cohort of officers who joined during the 'Golden Age' of the 1970s and 1980s and retained a high level of professional ethics.[135] As officers and soldiers have been spending more and more time catering for their private interests, they have been less and less available to improve their duty performance. As access to military academies and training abroad and sometimes diplomas themselves have been traded for favours, there has been less and less certainty of the proficiency of the alumni. Besides, in the absence of a

134 Various interviews with civilians and soldiers, Douala, Yaoundé (2010 and 2011), see also Ngome, Casimir (2007), *Cameroon's Military and Police in Clando Transport Business in the South West Province*, The Frontier Telegraph, 24 September, np

135 Interview Ca 11 with officer, Douala, April 2011

systematic record keeping of individual soldier's or officer's training courses or achievements in training or action, there is no objective foundation on which to base promotions or assign duties.[136] There is no institutional remembrance in the armed forces.[137] Such a context increases the likelihood that affectation or advancement decisions will be based on criteria other than merit, feeding further the vicious circle of clientele and corruption. Even worse consequences may at time ensue when several actors within the military try to reach out for the same lucrative deals. For example, a widely reported episode of armed assailants attacking a military post in Bakassi, killing 21 soldiers, in November 2007 was initially attributed to Nigerian pirates. However, it later came out that arms deals involving senior military were at the source of this assault: International Crisis Group research demonstrated that 'the objective of the attack was to eliminate witnesses to trafficking'.[138]

The second distortion is more of a sociological one, as the pillars of Cameroonian military power structures have remained the clientele networks of the old generals. The establishment of this military bourgeoisie with incomes out of all proportion with those of regular soldiers, and in all cases much higher than their immediate subordinates, has undermined the army's stability. It has created deep resentment in higher officers' ranks as many colonels have been barred from access to the circle of those privileged few, have seen their promotions blocked and have had to retire at the legal age of 65, unlike the generals themselves, with their ultimate goal forever dashed. The resentment is an economic one, as alternative opportunities, such as foreign postings or a

136 Interview Ca 17 French military adviser II, Yaoundé, June 2012

137 The MINDEF could provide the name of a Colonel in charge of military historiography. However, neither at the ministry, nor among the military leadership could anyone give the location of his office or his telephone coordinates

138 ICG (2010b), p.10

tour in a peacekeeping operation, are few and far between.[139] It is also a professional one, as the younger generation of officers generally have a higher level of education than their elders and commanding officers. On the other hand, the 'permanent generals' cannot but feel that their positions, one day, will be jeopardised. Finally, keeping the older generals active has also complicated the army's command as some of them entertain tense mutual relations; however, as they are all but 'untouchable', they cannot be disciplined. These tensions compound others, with which they sometimes overlap, such as suspicions raised by what is perceived as arbitrary promotion of Béti officers or lingering resentment from the attempted coup of 1984, as some of those who helped thwart the coup believe they were not sufficiently rewarded, while others think they were unjustly sanctioned.

4.2 Operational Roles and Capacity: A Patchwork

Officially, the Cameroonian military has two roles: one in defence of the territory and one in support of the country's economic development, as is traditional in many African armies. In practice, neither role is systematically and coherently carried out. On the contrary, mandate fulfilment appears the exception rather than the rule.

4.2.1 Combat Functions

As explained above, the management of the army via patronage networks and its contamination by business interests has damaged its efficiency both by disrupting the chain of command and undermining the proficiency of individual soldiers. Further neglect, motivated in part by the regime's concern not to allow the emergence of an armed counter-power, has

139 In many countries, peacekeeping operations provide a channel to reward high ranking officers or even simple soldiers. With very little Cameroonian involvement in such operations, this opportunity does not exist

led to a significant weakening of the Cameroonian regular military. Troops have increasingly insufficient incomes and equipment; they are poorly trained and are often kept idle. With few military barracks, soldiers live alongside civilians in military districts. Logistics, always a marginalised branch, remains limited to the barely necessary minimum, whether in terms of food, or ammunition or transport.[140] As a result, the operability of the regular army has decreased to a mediocre level.

Instead of calling upon the regular forces, President Biya's regime has been relying more and more on a wide range of specialised units. As indicated above, in 1984 the Presidential guard (GP) was created to ensure the head of state's personal security, followed a decade and a half later by the *Bataillon Léger d'Intervention* (BLI), which became the rapid deployment battalion (*Bataillon d'Intervention Rapide,* BIR) in 2001.[141] In the meantime, Marine commandos and the *Groupement Polyvalent d'Intervention de la Gendarmerie Nationale* (GPIGN) had also been set up in 1993 and 1999 respectively.[142] Although the BIR is officially entrusted with a public security mandate – initially, the fight against highway robbery in the north and east of the country – like the GP, it benefits from special treatment and depends directly on the President's office rather than the Ministry of Defence. That the BIR is a personal affair of the President is demonstrated by the fact that it was initially led and trained by a foreign officer retained on a private contract after he successfully shaped the GP to the President's liking.[143]

140 Although the logistic autonomy and fighting capacity ratio are normally calculated for four days at tactical level, 10 days at regional level and three months at national levels, these requirements are seldom met. Many gendarmerie brigades have no means of transport. Interview with General Semengue

141 See sections 2.5 and 2.8

142 Decrees no. 93/212 of 4 August 1993, 93/0940 of 4 September 1993, and 99/015 of 1 February 1999; Journal Officiel de la République du Cameroun

143 The Israeli Colonel and former defence attaché to the Israeli Embassy in Yaoundé, Avi Sirvan, who had trained the GP, later took over the command of the project BIR. He retired from the Israeli service and continued as a consultant. Sirvan died in a helicopter crash in

Recruitment for the BIR is different from the other corps: it is centralised while regular forces have a recruitment centre in each region. This makes it easier to generate a central national loyalty within the force. BIR soldiers have to constantly prove their capacity to be members of the unit in terms of toughness. They are very well trained at arms, and members of the public tend to refer to them as less intelligent but more robust in behaviour than regular soldiers.[144] Since the February 2008 riots, when they were deployed as reinforcements to secure Douala, Yaoundé and the Presidential palace threatened by demonstrators, their role has changed considerably. Since March 2009, their numbers have been increased, and they have replaced regular forces in Bakassi. This growing presence of the BIR in national security tasks has become problematic. Their deployment in Bakassi has been perceived as an act of defiance by the regular army. BIR and other forces units have clashed several times. For example, in April 2010, a dispute between BIR troops and policemen of the rapid intervention team (*Equipe spéciale d'intervention rapide*) degenerated into a gunfight in Bamenda in which four BIR soldiers were wounded. A particular cause of resentment by regular soldiers is that BIR troops are favoured both professionally – they are better equipped, better trained, and have more opportunities for real engagement – and personally – they enjoy advantages and bonuses that regular soldiers do not. According to some observers, Cameroon now has a two speed army, an *armée à deux vitesses,* with the BIR doing the fighting, and the regular military responsible for the parades.[145] However, considering the fact that the general staff of the armed forces has no effective control over the BIR, it seems to be

November 2010. This accident was accompanied by rumours of his allegedly trying to replace the GP through his BIR units; interview with Cameroonian academic (anonymised), April 2011

144 Interview Ca 9 with researcher at the Policy Institute in Yaoundé, April 2011

145 Interview Ca 17 with French military adviser II, Yaoundé, June 2012

fair to talk of two military bodies, neither of them fulfilling the role of a proper army.[146]

The sharp separation of the structures, however, does not mean total lack of both permeability and similarities at the personal level. Motivated officers, for example, can always be assigned to these specialised units rather than remaining frustrated with the main army. The privileged status of a force does not mean security for its members. For example, GP troops are subject to constant rotation from and into the army. Just like for any other privileged position, this rotation does not occur according to a predictable pattern. Any member can always hope to remain for an extended time with the guard, or to return to it if well-behaved. As a matter of principle, the privilege has to be deserved without guaranty of a lasting reward.[147]

In sum, five decades after independence, Cameroon appears to be endowed with what may seem as an 'ideal' combination from the perspective of the ruling President: first, a regular military too weak to challenge his authority, but contented with relative good salaries in comparison with civilian state employees and sufficient opportunities for officers to do business for their personal benefit; and, second, a few highly specialised and well-endowed combat units able to do actual fighting at the discretion of the President. Whether the system will prove sustainable, beyond the present incumbent, is an open question.

4.2.2 Development-support Function

On the occasion of the country's 50th anniversary, the Ministry of Defence issued a special publication hailing the armed forces' contribution to the

146 This is what Cameroonian observers suggest by speaking of an *armée à plusieur têtes*

147 Interview (anonymised) with the former trainer of GP, Douala, June 2012

development of the country including provision of security for hydro-electric barrages, road construction, the aerial transport of athletes to the national pupils' sports competition, and the transport of the Pope Bennedict XVI's special car, the '*Papamobile*' during his visit in 2009.[148] This was fully congruent with the 'army of development' concept dear to Central African military and political elites.

That concept, in Cameroon, resulted directly from the early practical function of the armed forces, even before the national military was created, consisting of waging a civil war in counterinsurgency mode. Winning the hearts and minds of the population was part and parcel of the role of the military. Road building work performed by military units in central Cameroon was part of the anti-guerrilla *pacification* strategy of the French forces.[149] These roads, as well as school building, water or sewage system installation could be rationalised as a contribution to the material development of the country, as opposed to the alleged destructive character of the insurgency. The tradition has been carried on as the FAC have been established. In this context, the engineer corps has had an important demonstrative role to play and has been constantly paraded on official occasions as a tool for development. This applies even to the BIR, who, during the large parade on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of independence, only displayed its collection of construction machines, although this force is created for combat only.[150]

148 Kenmegne, Léandre (2011), Honneur et Fidelité, Ministère de la Défense Division de la Communication,, Yaoundé, p.13

149 See AHM Chateau Vincennes (1958), Report 954 Zone de pacification de la Sanaga Maritim of 7 March 1958, Commandant de ZOPAC Lt. Col. Lamberton, No 17/ZPC/S in 6H242, Parisnp. According to General Directive No 2 'all inhabitants too far from the *routes carrossables* had to give up their home and move to the new streets'. The territory in revolt had been divided in five sectors within the zone of pacification (known by its French acronym, ZOPAC) in late January 1958; Order Zopac No 1 quoted by Mbembe, Achille (1996), La naissance du maquis dans le Sud-Cameroun, 1920-1960, Karthala, Paris, p.349

150 Cameroon Today, Cameroon Government News: Army Indicates Support To Unity, 4 June 2011, http://news.cameroon-today.com/cameroon-government-news-army-indicates-support-to-unity/6024/#ixzz1OItHCEsN

Recent research, however, demonstrates that the impact of the military effort on development has been and remains minimal or inexistent.[151] The 148 kilometres of dirt roads, paved roads, and four airfields constructed by the Cameroon military engineers over the period 1960-1975 were without exception in the regions of the *maquis* (Bamiléké) and were executed solely during the anti-guerrilla operations. Unfinished structures, such as a large landing strip for a Boeing 737 at Bafoussam, were even reportedly abandoned as military engineers returned to their barracks at the end of the rebellion.[152] In the more recent period, the BIR, the Presidential Guard, or the army have been involved in small scale activities to build schools, dispensaries, bridges or other civil engineering works in the countryside. Such events, extensively photographed and broadcasted, are meant mainly as 'marketing' for the armed forces. They involve only a handful of *Génie militaire* troops and, according to a source, 'there are no aspirations to do more'.[153] Senior officers have also rejected the Ministry of Defence's official claim that civilians benefit from the military health and sanitary services: *Les hopitaux militaires ne sont pas ouverts au public*.[154] In other words, the assertion that the armed forces are making a significant contribution to development by improving infrastructure in remote parts of the country, building roads or air transport facilities, improving general hygiene and health services, or supporting the agro-pastoral production, are not justified.[155] Ironically, although the President was emphasising that very contribution in his speech on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Cameroonian army and inaugurated the construction of a 60

151 Marshall and Cole (2011)

152 See Touwa (2007), p.113

153 Interview Ca 12, Col. III, December 2010 Libreville

154 Such a statement contradicts a publication of the national MoD celebrating the 50th anniversary of the armed forces, see Kenmegne (2011), p.16

155 See for instance Ela Ela, Emmanuel (2000), La politique de défense du Cameroun depuis 1959 : contraintes et réalités, PhD, History and Sociology Department, Univerity of Nantes, pp.199ff

room military structure, the medals for the work done went to a company belonging of the Chinese PLA.[156]

4.3 The soldier, the State, and the Citizen

Fifty years after independence, the Cameroonian military's relationship with the people remain ambiguous. On the one hand, the military still bears some of the scars of its history – the treason committed by the armed elites exporting their subjects into bondage in the early colonial period, followed by the shaping of the modern military by, and for the needs of, the colonial power. On the other, its reputation is much better than that of any other domestic security force. Recent research indicates that 'only' 64 per cent of Cameroonian citizens consider the military as corrupt, as against 81 per cent for the justice system and 86 per cent for the police.[157] An explanation given to this author, who asked the same type of questions to different interviewees, is that soldiers have few occasions to be in contact with the population, unlike the police and the gendarmerie, who are able to exploit their proximity to the people.[158] By contrast, the reputation of the police is abysmal, although citizens do not seem to have other means of guarding against abuse than continuously offering bribes to the force.[159] Belonging to the so-called 'third category',[160] soldiers are not visible in public and they normally have no permission to carry

156 Biya, Paul (2010), Presidency, Bamenda, 8 December; Ngu Ekigole (2010), np

157 Transparency International, *Global Corruption Barometer 2013*, www.transparency.org/gcb2013/country/?country=cameroon

158 Territorial gendarmerie roaming the countryside are much more prone to petty corruption than their colleagues in bigger communities

159 According to a 2011 joint study of the Cameroon National Institute of Statistics and the *Commission Nationale Anti-Corruption* (CONAC, created in March 2006), 64.8 per cent of citizens interviewed have pro-actively offered bribes to security forces other than the military, République du Cameroun (2011), Mai, Institute National de la Statistique, Yaoundé, p.43. The 2013 Transparency International index puts the percentage at 69 per cent as regards the police. The establishment of independent police training centres has reportedly accelerated the decrease in professional discipline, see Titi Nwel (1999), p.53

160 Based on the presidential decree of 5 April 1986, no. 86/286, the first category includes *Gendarmerie territoriale*, police and auxiliaries under the authority of the civil administration, the second category includes *Gendarmerie mobile* and formed police units deployed on request of the administration, and the third category is the military

arms (except the Presidential Guard) or to don a uniform in public.[161] The prospect of a career in the military, a relatively distant and neutral body from the perspective of the average citizen, remains attractive if only because of the knowledge that the armed forces belong to the happy few who are paid on a timely basis.[162] A captain receives three times the salary of a university professor with 20 years of professional practice.

Communication between and among civilian stakeholders and their military counterparts takes place both at the highest level of governance in the form of a political bargain supported by a bargain on resources and also at the elite level just underneath in the form of a second bargain, mainly based on resource exchange. There is no independent bargain between the community of citizens representing the nation and the military below those levels. The bargain among the military and civilian elites is therefore a component part of the 'elite power struggle', which is an intra-elite confrontation about power and wealth, rather than a bargain between the rulers and the ruled.[163] To these internal bargains must be added the bargain between the state as a sovereign actor and foreign sovereign actors, including the security apparatus of different states involved on both sides of this social confrontation.[164]

5 Conclusion

Cameroon has nominally had only one single regular armed force since 1960. If it comes to the substance, however, one can conceptually differentiate between three different quasi-armies which to some extent co-existed or chronologically overlapped: first, the pre-independence forces of the

161 The latter prohibitions are not enforced, however

162 In that context, the GP is ranked first before the land forces, followed by the air force, which is trailed by the navy. Prospects for career advancement are limited in the latter two services, which together count for less than 3,000 personnel

163 See Mehler (2008)

164 The second of these two bargains was described by Burton, Richard Francis (1961), The Lake Regions of Central Africa: A Picture of Exploration, Horizon Press, New York

transitional government of Cameroon, the *Garde Camerounaise*; second, the neo-colonial *Forces armées camerounaises* of the first decade of independence after 1960; and, third, the same FAC in their quasi-monarchist incarnation after 1982. In a way, the army evolved from being an instrument of French rule, via an existence as French satellite combat forces, to form a pillar of the personal rule system of President Paul Biya. In terms of missions, these armed forces also went through three phases. First, they were declared a 'people's army' to fight the domestic insurgency until about 1975; secondly, they grew into a Republican armed force to defend the territory of the state; and third they became a tool to project the regional foreign policy and political interests of the incumbent regime. Although there is some risk from an overspill of instability in the region (Nigeria, the Chad and Centrafrique are clear examples), Cameroon has so far found peaceful solutions to border problems with all of its neighbours. Lacking the international security environment that would justify the maintenance of an army, the armed forces drew their legitimacy from their alleged function as an 'army of development'. As demonstrated above, this promise was not fulfilled.

The level of discipline in the Cameroonian armed forces is much higher than that of the other national uniformed bodies.[165] The security forces (army, gendarmerie, police) serve as the regime's principal support, used to compensate for its lack of popular legitimacy and to satisfy its obsession with order and internal stability. But these forces suffer from several weaknesses: they are fragmented, with ill-equipped, regular forces on the one hand, and privileged specialized units on the other. Some of the forces have also developed ties with business or criminal organisations. Trained from the

165 An assessment shared by national and foreign observers throughout, including French and US American liaison officers, interviews and conversations with relevant military in Cameroon, Libreville, Paris, and London

beginning to represent the regime's discreet reserve to combat its own citizens, the security forces have, since independence, been a key element of regime stability in Cameroon. The regime of President Ahmadou Ahidjo used them to establish his authority at independence, crushing the UPC, which threatened his rule. Their heavy public presence in the 1960s and 1970s amounted to a virtual state of war, and they have played an important part in repressing opponents of the regime and controlling the country's citizenry. To fight against 'enemies from within', they benefited from emergency rule for a long period: for 30 years it was 'the rule, the norm, and part of daily life'.[166] It was only in 1993, during the conflict with Nigeria over the Bakassi peninsula, that the army assumed partially what should be its primary role, namely the defence of the national territory. For Cameroon this mainly phony war had the effect of what Hans Ulrich Wehler describes as 'social imperialism', namely a policy to divert internal tensions outwards in order to preserve the political status quo at a time when the democracy movement jeopardised Biya's regime's monopoly.[167]

Over time the armed forces had to adapt from being the main pillar of political power during the civil war to becoming one among many chains of career and wealth distribution in an increasingly complex power structure, to the regret of many individual soldiers and officers who joined in the 1970s and early 1980s and have stood firm to the ideological orientation they gained with their Cold War era training, defending the dignity of the armed forces and their personal integrity against the politically and economically corrupt environment of their neo-patrimonial quasi-state.

Looking at the official army guidelines, in 1984 Paul Biya still described the people's defence concept of the 1960s as necessarily 'the symbiosis

166 See Eboussi Boulaga (1997), p.66

167 See Wehler, Hans-Ulrich (1979 (1970)), *Sozialimperialismus*, in Wehler, Hans-Ulrich, Imperialismus Athenäum, Königstein, 83-96

between the armed forces and the nation'.[168] However, the notion of a defence by the people faded swiftly from the official discourse shortly after the democratisation process begun in the early 1990s. The idea that anyone except the ruling power could be responsibly participating in any form of defence lost its ideological appeal to the leadership. In a cascade of laws the executive's monopoly on defence related issues was underlined, and Parliament side-lined.

The official justification for this change in policy and doctrine away from a 'nation in arms' was the growing internationalisation of military tasks of the army through the increasing regionalisation of military operations in connection with the African Standby Force – claimed even if Cameroon never participated in such operations in a meaningful way. The new policy was presented as necessary to enable the army to face new threats, by transforming it, as it was formulated, from a 'guardian to an avant-garde'.[169] To introduce this new doctrine officially, which served the desires of external donors more than the state of Cameroon, the idea of defence as a national common task had to be abandoned. In this way the military could be spared the burden of becoming an element of public concern, let alone participation.

The Cameroonian military perfectly fits into a system that only allows the formation of an indirectly ruled state under closed society conditions. It defends and maintains a system of networks, which is a refined and sophisticated version of patronage, prone to corruption and protected from accountability to the population. The military does not form a coherent body at the discretionary service at the state. Rather, it is a quasi-army functioning as one of several auxiliary tools for the elite to maintain their grip on power – at the expense of

168 Author's translation from Biya, Paul (1988), Le message du renouveau: discours et interviews du President Paul Biya, décembre 1983-novembre 1988, Vol. 1, Société de Presse et d'Editions du Cameroun, Yaoundé, p.223

169 See Messinga (2007)

progress towards institutionalisation and the implementation of the rule of law. The military is one part of the bureaucracy, which remains among the safest stairways to wealth and social security.

Chapter Five: Rwanda
Three Republics, Two Militaries, One Army

Independent Rwanda has seen three republics and three different regular armed forces, but among them just one army in the professional sense of the term. Unlike the Congo, Cameroon, and most modern African countries, Rwanda has an ancient history as a strong, centralised state. That history is characterised by the inseparability of the military from the political order, the former providing the narrative and the effective foundation for the latter. Rwanda also has a modern history as a weak state coinciding with a large part of the colonial period and post-independent years until the 1994 genocide. The genocide was a watershed, ushering in a phase of national re-foundation, in which the reconstruction of the national identity was pursued in parallel with the restoration of a strong state, with the military playing a key role. The genocide, therefore, appears both as an element of profound rupture and as a pivotal moment in the reversal of the historical drifts toward state and military weakening begun with the arrival of colonisation. It will serve as the organising principle of the present chapter. Section 1 will therefore cover the evolution of the Rwandan state and the coinciding fate of its military until 1994, whereas section 2 will address the country's post-genocide physical and moral rebuilding, which would not have been possible without the crucial role played by the military, both qualitatively and quantitatively.

1 The Military in Rwanda's Pre-genocide History: From Strong to Weak State

For analytical purposes, the history of Rwanda until the genocide and including the immediate post-genocide period can be broken into seven phases,

which this section will address successively along a single underlying theme: the matching evolution of the state and its military.

1.1 Prelude: Pre-colonial and Colonial Rwanda

The root of the word *Rwanda* has been translated by Rwandan scholars as 'drive for expansion'.[1] The country's history has indeed, from its early formation in the 12th century to the colonial period, been one of territorial extension through conquest, to the point that it cannot be distinguished from its military history.[2] The implementation of this drive, which is spiritual in essence, is entrusted to a mortal king-god, the *Mwami*, whose role it is to strengthen and enrich the kingdom (the state). Rwandan kings were to work in a cycle of four, each having to fulfil a certain task during his reign. Each cycle of four started with a King of peace, who had to foster the land to strengthen it. His successor would have to be a warring king, expected to expand Rwanda's power. The next king would then have to defend the state against any counterattacks that would inevitably follow the aggressive expansion. The fourth king was to consolidate the country and 'mop up' after the violent destruction.[3]

In practice, Rwanda's history spanning from the 14th to the 19th century is one of permanent warfare, as part of the country's perpetual expansion drive, but also because of internal strife. Military expeditions were a means to acquire wealth in the form of cattle,[4] but also ivory and cotton, or women and children, who would be sold into slavery domestically or abroad. They were also a means to cater for the growing needs of the – increasingly competing – political elites.

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1 Stemming from the Kinyarwanda concept of Ku-uranda, see Rusagara, Frank K, et al. (2009), Resilience of a Nation: a History of the Military in Rwanda, Fountain Publishers Rwanda, Kigali

2 Muzungu, Bernadin (2003), Histoire du Rwanda Pré-colonial, L'Harmattan, Paris, p.358

3 Rusagara, et al. (2009), pp.9ff

4 Rwanda was already densely populated, unlike the Central African rainforest

Originally, the monarchy was based on two dynastic lineages. However, over time, differentiation between family lineages became difficult due to intermarriages. Rival contenders to the throne built their networks of *buhake* (or *ubuhake*) clients in order to promote their relative positions as *dauphin*.[5] A primary tool to acquire clients, as this was the key marker of wealth and power, was the control of cattle. As cattle were acquired primarily by raids, this led to increased warfare. For this reason, 'war was at least as welcome to the aristocrats at court as to the king'.[6]

The need for war led to an increase in the number of 'armies' over time[7] and to their increased professionalisation. Originally, upon assuming power, each king had set up new regiments, whilst those of the previous generation were often, but not always, decommissioned. By 1700, however, the standby system was replaced with standing formations. More than 20 such formations equalling the size of a modern battalion insured the constant readiness of about 13,000 men under arms.[8] Some small-scale private militias, oriented primarily toward the protection of family property, were eventually incorporated into the army by the end of the 19th century.[9] Whereas patrimonial situations became more and more inherited, the professionalisation of the army was relentlessly pursued, opening career opportunities based on merit.[10]

Constant warfare necessitated 'conscription of the whole population into the armies organised by the chains of patron-client relations whose supreme

5 Vansina, Jan (2004), Antecedents to Modern Rwanda The Nyiginya Kingdom, University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, p.88; progressively the primitive patron client relationship manifested as a general feudal order. Similar patronage systems in Burundi and Ankole were called bugabire and okutoisha, respectively, Lemarchand, René (1977), *Political Clientelism and Ethnicity in Tropical Africa*, in Schmidt, Steffen W, et al., Friends, Followers, and Factions University of California Press, Berkeley, 13-37, p.103

6 Kagame, Alexis (1963), Les Milices du Rwanda précolonial, Academie Royale des Sciences d'Outre-Mer, Brussels, pp.41f

7 Vansina (2004), p.97

8 Rusagara, et al. (2009), p.24

9 Ibid. (2009), p.43

10 Other pre-colonial standing armies existed in comparable states in the region: Buganda, Ankole, and Nyobe, see Wrighley (1996)

patron was the king'.[11] The congruence of people and army was described in those terms by a Rwandan social scientist: 'Everybody was in the army, the men, the women, even the cows.'[12] In practical terms, the military capability was divided in two: soldier units concentrating on combat only, and the 'cattle army', caring for the animals that provided the food and logistic basis of the combat force. The spouses of the soldiers would form a third force or 'home front': by fasting, praying and keeping absolute loyalty, they erected an invisible protection screen around their fighting husbands. Children were part of this 'social army', too, as, in pre-colonial Rwanda, all school was military school.[13] This, in addition, ensured an exceptional linguistic uniformity of the people. Historians such as Gamaliel Mbonimana thus advocate the claim that Rwanda was a pre-colonial coherent nation state.[14]

By about 1850 one of the eight kingdoms on modern Rwandan territory, the Nyiginya, had conquered the other seven in a way comparable to the ancient Chinese Qin empire during the Warring Kingdoms Era,[15] and become the dominant state.[16] Successive cycles of state formation warfare were instrumental in fostering a national identity (a spiritual and social 'Rwandan-ness') as the small core grew into an increasingly larger community encompassing the gradually subdued neighbouring groups.[17] The extension of the Rwandan politico-military clientele system on newly occupied territory

11 Vansina (2004), p.95

12 Interview RW 12 with Charles Gakumba, Journalist and Historian, Kigali, May 2011

13 Alexis Kagame coined the term social army for the military completely integrated into society

14 Mbonimana, Gamaliel (1998), Le Rwanda Etat-Nation au XIXe Siecle, unpublished paper presented at Butare, December, 1998

15 See chapter 2

16 Chrétien, Jean-Pierre (2000), L' Afrique des Grands Lacs: deux mille ans d'histoire, Aubier, Paris, p.160f

17 Including campaigns against Buha, Bunyabungo (modern Bukavu) to the South-west, and extending to Lake Edward to the North, see Newbury, David (1974), *Les campagnes de Rwabugiri: chronologie et bibliographie*, Cahiers d'études africaines, 14, 53, 181-191

made every additional subject into a direct or indirect client to the commander-in-chief and king.[18]

Conquest and territorial extension were accompanied by the development of a centralised administrative apparatus. Property taxes were introduced at the latest during the mid-1900s, amounting to two and a half to three per cent for herders, whilst the poor deprived of land and cattle were more and more often subject to compulsory work to the benefit of the elites. Military and political state-strengthening measures became more and more cohesive, as demonstrated for example by the political decision, in 1855, to forego the benefits of expanding long distance trade with Gujarat via Arab traders such as the Sultan of Zanzibar[19] – by then perceived as a long term threat[20] – at the same time as the Rwandan army defended the country and the population against slave traders – which, uniquely among African pre-colonial militaries, it did successfully throughout the 19th century.[21] At the same time, the total inclusion of the community into the military effort of the state led to a glorification of militarism and martial violence, which permeated 'the whole of [Rwandan] culture as the armies became the foundation of the administrative structure of the realm'.[22]

At the dawn of the colonial era, the Rwandan state had thus gone through all pre-modern stages of state formation.[23] It had become institutionalised in a feudal form on the basis of a two-pillar foundation, a political one, linked to

18 Vansina (2004), p.182; the occupation of Silesia by Frederick II of Prussia had a similar purpose; in the 19th century the modified *uburetwa* patronage system increasingly started resembling a forced labour relationship, see Mamdani (2002), pp.66ff

19 Lugan (1997), p.217

20 Vansina (2004), pp.157f

21 Although Arab traders and slave hunters had managed to establish small state-like constructs on Lunda territory in the Congolese savannah, their attempts to penetrate Rwanda were frustrated. See Chrétien (2000); Lugan (1997), pp.168f, 217f; Burton (1961), Vol.2, p.183

22 Vansina (2004), p.176

23 Rwanda was not alone in experiencing such a development: an international society of mature states such as Buganda and Burundi developed in the vicinity long before Western emissaries and Arab merchants arrived, see Mbonimana (1998)

expanding dominion over neighbouring zones, and a spiritual one, with the king being the keeper of both features of the national identity. The unity of the state and the army was inherent in this institutional format, so that the two could not be distinguished, either conceptually or in practice.

Arriving Europeans found a state in place with a territorial core under the tight control of the monarchy and a frontier-like periphery where central control was episodic.[24] The first settlers, the Germans, and then the Belgians, opted for indirect rule, using the Tutsi monarchy for their own purposes, but reshaping it as needed. The German authorities even reinforced the power of the king by mopping up the pockets of resistance to the monarchy, which had resulted from intra-elite succession conflicts.[25] For some time, Rwandan warfare also increased against neighbours who used alliances with other European powers to advance their own territorial designs.[26] This, however, came to an end in 1907 when the German protectorate enforced 'imperial peace', much to the complaint of the Tutsi king.[27] Nevertheless, when conflict arose among the Europeans, the Rwandan monarchy stood by its alliance with Germany and fought against the Belgian *Force Publique* (FP), even beyond that which had been agreed as its contribution, until the siege of Tabora in then Deutsch-Ostafrika, which marked the end of the German presence.[28]

Whilst the Germans were content to supervise the monarchy in place, the Belgian administrators arriving in 1916 literally had to fight their way in, against Rwandan military resistance, and faced a hostile environment from the outset.

24 See Kandt (1901)

25 This included two expeditions against Bugoyi (Gisenyi province) and one against a pretender to the throne, Ndungutse, in 1912, Turner (2007), p.72

26 Okafor (2000), p.29

27 The electoral campaign of the year, the so-called Hottentottenwahl focussed on German colonial policy after the genocide of indigenous people in Namibia

28 Most of the German regular soldiers were Sudanese Askaris, who like former Egyptian Mahdi fighters were motivated to fight the British, see also Michels, Stefanie (2006), Schwarze deutsche Kolonialsoldaten. Mehrdeutige Repräsentationsräume und früher Kosmopolitismus in Afrika, Transcript Verlag, Bielefeld, pp.23ff; Morlang (2008), p.17

In order to assert their control over the territory, they had to reshape the country's ruling and security systems radically.

For this, they enlisted the help of Catholic missionaries. Father Léon Classe provided valuable intelligence and his document, *L'organisation politique du Ruanda au début de l'occupation belge,* 'served as a guide to the new administrators'.[29] For a short period, in 1924, as Rwanda (together with Burundi) was entrusted to Belgium by a League of Nations mandate,[30] they tried the 'indirect rule' formula that they had inherited from the Germans in Ruanda-Urundi, and with which they were experimenting themselves in some regions of Congo, for example among the Luba people of Katanga. However, they soon realised that this would not secure them the wished-for degree of control.[31] As in Congo, they therefore resolved to develop a 'native policy', the gist of which lay in promoting the emergence of new social and political elites owing them their loyalty. For this, each of the two kingdoms (Rwanda and Burundi) was divided into *chefferies* (chiefdoms) and *sous-chefferies*, placed under so-called 'traditional' (actually new) chiefs. 'Schools for sons of chiefs' provided the necessary skills to the new generation of literate administrators, who would serve as intermediaries between the colonial administration and the African masses.'[32] To exploit the colony, the imperial masters 'relied on the support and assistance of three classes of intermediaries: the middle bourgeoisie, the petty bourgeoisie and the traditional rulers or chiefs'.[33] In the course of this effort, Belgium maintained the Tutsi element of the population in privileged positions, while dismissing most of the middle ranking Hutu notabilities. Most important, Rwanda was demilitarised. First, Rwandan

29 Turner (2007), p.59

30 The mandate was transformed into an administrative accord by a vote of the General Assembly of the United Nations on 13 December 1946

31 Similarly, in Congo, the various Luba chiefs had acquired a degree of autonomy that they were increasingly unwilling to surrender to their nominal sovereign

32 Turner (2007) p.28

33 ibid. p.30

soldiers who had fought alongside the German army were demobilised; second, as Rwanda-Urundi came under League of Nations mandate, as we saw in Cameroon, Rwandans were forbidden to join any military force on Rwandan territory. This deprived the country of one of the two anchors of its social cohesion and pillars of its identity.

With the new political elites established, the second anchor of traditional Rwandaness, the *Mvami*, was equally to be undermined. Belgium's assumption of the League of Nations Mandate in 1924 was accompanied by a letter of submission of King Musinga to the King of the Belgians.[34] Although Belgian colonisation kept the feudal system in place, the King was significantly weakened by the abrogation of his army, made official by the so-called Mortehan reforms in 1926. The final blow to Rwanda's traditional ruling system came in November 1931 when the King was deposed by the colonial administration because he had refused a baptism, which would have deprived him of his spiritual power and destroyed his bond with the people.

As of the Mortehan reforms, the FP enjoyed the monopoly of violence on Rwandan territory. Although composed mostly of Africans (see chapter three), the FP was as alien to the Rwandese as their Belgian officers were: it had arrived as an occupational force and had disarmed the dynasty and the people; and it was commanded from Stanleyville (modern Kisangani) until the independence of the Congo in 1960.[35] The FP inaugurated a form of colonial 'quasi-army', which would be inherited by its Rwandan successor at independence.

34 Obenga, Theophile (1989), Les Peuples bantu: Migrations, expansion et identité culturelle, L'Harmattan, Paris, p.27; Musinga was replaced by the Belgians by Mutara III, the first Christian king and after his death in 1959 by Kigeli V, who was ousted by the Belgian-supported 1959 Hutu revolution

35 Logiest, Guy (1988), Mission au Rwandan - un Blanc dans la Bagarre Tutsi-Hutu, Hatier, Bruxelles, p.17

Social re-engineering would accompany those military and political reforms. Rwandan social stratification had already been simplified by Germans by factually eliminating the Hutu chiefs and eventually distributing identity cards bearing the label 'Tutsi', 'Hutu' or 'Twa', separating them from other African subjects and from one another.[36] The Belgians, however, went beyond that by categorising these differentiations as 'racial', where they were previously regarded only as tribal. Rwandans' racial status therefore became administratively and legally 'frozen' as of the 1933 census,[37] eliminating any kind of permeability across the groups. The Hutu and Tutsi were thereafter lifelong bound to this denotation, for good or for evil, automatically passing it to the next generation. How much the Belgians are to blame for the divisions remains in dispute. Recent historiography has argued that lineage and region have always been central for Rwandan identity formation[38] and that ethnic categories already existed in late pre-colonial times and were then exploited to divide the population.[39] Other observers emphasise that such traditional differences between Hutu and Tutsi were reflected by a division of administrative labour, where by each group took over certain bureaucratic positions according to their economic role in society. Similarly, provincial administrations were headed by a diarchy, with a Hutu responsible for the land and a Tutsi in charge of defence.[40] But Belgium imposed a hierarchy, the source of enduring animosity. In sum, with Belgian colonisation, the nation

36 Turner (2007), p.61

37 Longman, Timothy and Théoneste Rutagengwa (2004), *Memory, Identity, and Community in Rwanda*, in Stover, Eric and Weinstein, Harvey M, My Neighbor, My Enemy: Justice and Community in the Aftermath of Mass Atrocity Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 162-182, p.101

38 Newbury, David S (1980), *Newbury, David S. "The Clans of Rwanda: An Historical Hypothesis." Africa: Journal of the International African Institute 50, no. 4 (1980): 389–403*, Journal of the International African Institute, 50, 4, 389–403

39 Morel, Jacques (2010), La France au Coeur du Genocide des Tutsi, Izuba edition, Paris, p.17

40 See Rusagara, et al. (2009)

was physically and spiritually disarmed, its social cohesion annulled, and the people conquered and divided.

1.2 Transition to independence

Until 1962, the year of independence, the Belgian Congo FP was still in place in Ruanda-Urundi, although the Belgian Congo did not exist anymore.

Incorporation of native Rwandans into the Congolese FP coincided with Belgian intent to reinforce the defence of the Congolese territory (especially in the Bas-Congo area) and started in 1955 with the enlistment of 35 men each from Ruanda and Urundi.[41] There was noted reluctance, however, from the Belgian authorities, to see Rwandans accede to high-ranking military positions. For instance, the minister had stated in an exchange of letters that he would prefer not to have a Rwandan as the first African in command of the FP.[42] Rare reports by the mandate authorities did indicate that the small contingent deployed to Congo (532 troops in 1944) were sufficiently trained, able to maintain public order, and of good military value.[43] It was therefore expected in 1955 that soldiers from Rwanda would swiftly be able to cover the ranks of NCOs and officers. However, none of them would complete the necessary officer training before 1962.

However, given the deteriorating security situation, caused by the political contest of Tutsi rule as of May 1959, Belgium used a loophole in the mandate regulations[44] to decree the recruitment of Rwandans as 'volunteers' for the FP

41 AA, Africa Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1955), Defense du Congo, Letter to the vice Governor General of Rwanda-Urundi FP 2517 239/41, Ministere de Congo Belge et Rwanda-Urundi, Brussels

42 AA, Africa Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1959), FP 2517 269-41 Letter Gouverneur to Ministère de Congo Belge et Rwanda-Urundi in copy Vice Gouverneur of Rwanda-Urundi, 26 Mai 1959, Leopoldville

43 AA (1944), 15 January 1945. The report on 1945 is an exact copy of the previous year's, with only the dates adjusted. It is worth remembering that 1944 was the year of a major mutiny of the FP in the Congo

44 Namely articles 84 of the UN Charter, and 5.3 of the mandate agreement

on Rwandan territory.[45] The *Conseil Militaire* had indeed by that time come to the conclusion that including Rwandan soldiers in the security forces would mitigate the character of the FP as an occupying force and therefore increase their acceptability.[46] The implementation of the plan would be facilitated by the presence of a number of Rwandans, some serving at the time in the armed forces in Uganda and Tanzania, who would be offered legal access to military careers, and some 300 Rwandan FP veterans living in the former Congo colony, who could be enlisted immediately.[47] A degree of caution remained, however: the *Conseil Militaire* wished to avoid facing the same difficulties as the British in Nigeria in 1958, when, once the control of the military had passed to local civilian authorities, young African lieutenants demanded quick promotion to the rank of general.[48] Africanisation was on the agenda, but a timeframe of some 15 years was considered healthy to complete the process. In 1960, two years before independence, the Belgian mandate forces were renamed *Garde nationale du Ruanda-Urundi*. Initially no single member of the force came from one of the two territories appearing in its name; officers were Belgian, and NCOs or *gradés* were Congolese, even if Rwandophone.[49]

Since its assumption of the mandate in 1924, Belgium had secured its dominance on Rwanda-Urundi by supporting, equipping, and educating the Tutsi for leadership, at the same time as it had alienated them from their indigenous traditions. The Catholic Church, through its monopoly on teaching

45 From 1916 to 1924 the FP in Rwanda was called the 'Occupational Force in German East Africa'

46 AA, Africa Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1959), FP 410/452, minutes Belgian military council, 12 February 1959

47 AA, Africa Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1959), Note du directeur general du conseiller militaire, 12 Fevrier 1959, FP 2517 410/252, Ministère des Forces Armées, Brussels

48 AA (1955)

49 In the two decades after 1930 Belgium resettled thousands of Rwandans in Eastern Congo to balance the overpopulated agrarian population against the under populated mining territories in the Kivus and Maniema. This represented one of the several 20th century migrations of Rwandans, called Banyarwandans, as opposed to the earlier so-called Banyamulenge migrants of the 19th century

at the ‘chiefs’ sons schools’ and thanks to its prestige, had been a major instrument of that policy of assimilation, and it would continue to be a key force in the social and political remodelling of Rwanda in the crucial 1957-1962 period leading to independence.

A particularly important figure in Belgian calculations was Grégoire Kayibanda, the son of an immigrant Bushi from Eastern Congo, editor-in-chief of the Catholic Journal of Rwanda, and the personal secretary to Bishop Classe. Kayibanda would become the first president of the independent Rwandan Republic. With the 1957 publication of the ‘Hutu Manifesto’, Kayibanda’s sectarian Parmehutu[50] party (MDR) unleashed a chain of violent spasms that would have no end until the 1994 genocide. At its root, the MDR crusade was based on a demand for the institution of greater equality in Rwandan society, where, as it was claimed, a privileged Tutsi minority would systematically reduce the majority of the population to inferiority and a subordinate existence.[51]

An important turn in Belgian policy occurred when the colonial power calculated that it would better serve its interest to side with the Hutu majority against the Tutsi elites, so it now supported Kayibanda. However, his campaign with the tacit support of Belgium would soon take a clearly racist overtone. The MDR (strongly supported by the Church[52]) energetically opposed the elimination of identity cards mentioning ethnic affiliation. With this ethnic separation kept in place, it would become possible to establish a

50 Parti du Mouvement de l'Emancipation Hutu also know as Mouvement démocratique republicain Parmehutu (MDR)

51 Obenga (1989), p.28

52 Rusagara, et al. (2009), pp.89-111, who consider the Bishop as the main architect of the demise of indigenous administration

'racially' defined majority able to perpetuate control of power indefinitely, under a democratic guise.[53]

Feeling threatened, Tutsi elites began to take up arms. Mediation efforts undertaken by the territorial Belgian administrator remained fruitless and could not prevent the escalation of violence. One party in the ensuing confrontation was primarily Tutsi, but accompanied by numerous Hutu loyal to their patrons; they assembled in the pre-colonial way for the *Ingabo*. In such royal armies' pre-campaign meetings they dressed in traditional uniforms, arming themselves with bows and swords. The other side comprised Hutu militias and, in Butare, a force of revolutionary activists assembled by the powerful Hutu Joseph Gitera Habyarimana. Last ditch attempts by the King to mediate between the opponents were foiled by the Belgians, who suspected him to be a co-conspirator in the Tutsi cause. The King was eventually driven out of the country by the 1959 Hutu Revolution.[54]

Order was restored and the killings stopped when Rwanda was placed under a military administration, with Colonel Guy Logiest appointed as military resident.[55] A state of emergency was declared and Belgian metropolitan forces were deployed to Rwanda. Colonel Logiest took the opportunity to replace Tutsi administrators with his Hutu allies.[56] Meanwhile, the civil strife had made an estimated 50,000, mainly Tutsi, victims turn to direct violence, and it had driven about 150,000 of them into neighbouring countries.

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53 The theory that Rwandans were divided between Hametic tribes and Bantus was coined by a French ethnographer, and was taught in Rwanda until 1994. Newbury, Catherine (1988), The Cohesion of Oppression: Clientship and Ethnicity in Rwanda, 1860–1960, Columbia University Press, New York; Newbury (2003); Newbury, David and Catherine Newbury (2000), *Bringing the Peasants Back In: Agrarian Themes in the Construction and Corrosion of Statist Historiography in Rwanda*, American Historical Review, 105, 3, 832-877

54 UN General Assembly resolutions 1579 and 1580, which called for a re-installation of the monarchy were not responded to, Rauschnin, Dietrich, et al. (1997), Key Resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly 1946-1996, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp.178f

55 Logiest (1988), pp.41ff

56 Reyntjens (1985), p.268

With Kayibanda assuming the presidency in 1962, the former colonial overlord had secured a new regime that appeared to be born out of a social and democratic revolution, and which was definitely more suitable to Brussels interests than the unthankful traditional monarchy. In an exchange of letters Kayibanda left no doubt of his admiration for Colonal Logiest's input regarding the establishment of his government – calling it a vital contribution to the 'liberation of the Rwandese masses' from Tutsi overrule.[57] The new armed forces, however, came with the birth defect of the independent state: Tutsi remaining in the country were not at all welcome as recruits, and would anyway show a low profile; those who had fled abroad during the civil strife would later become primary recruiting source for the exile *Inyenzi* movement, which planned the re-conquest of the country. [58]

Overall, Rwanda's decolonisation went much more smoothly than Cameroon's and Congo's, as the battle for political power had been fought out before independence. The total destruction of pre-colonial indigenous political structures had enabled the new Hutu elites surrounding Kayibanda to secure their basis of power along ethnic lines. Far from its former role as an integral component of pre-colonial state institutions, the military had been separated from political power and remained under barely concealed Belgian paternity.

57 Translated by this author from his autobiographic account, Logiest (1988), pp.209-212: in the same section Logiest also gives account of the view of Rwandans content with his departure, quoting their pamphlet underscoring his responsibility for the bloody events of November 1959 as saying 'Adieu mon Colonel, finally he leaves!!'

58 inganguraru go zyyemmeje kuba ingenzi, one of the classical 19th century Rwandan armies, meaning 'the brave ones serving the king' with a clear reference to their monarchist ideology, later distorted to Inyenzi the pernicious guerrilla cockroach that comes at night, see Lemarchand, René (2002), *Disconnecting the Threads: Rwanda and the Holocaust Reconsidered*, Idea Electronic Journal of Social Issues, 7, 1, np

1.3 The First Republic

Congruent with the political platform that he had initiated with his 1957 'Hutu Manifesto', President Kayibanda set out to reconstruct Rwanda on the basis of absolute Hutu dominance and the elimination of any residual Tutsi influence. For this, he was to use all of the tools at his disposal, including authoritarian political power and the security forces. He could benefit from continued Belgian support. The installation of the single-party system of the MDR was one vehicle of choice to assert his political power.

Two features characterise the military of the First Republic: first, it served the interests of one ethnic group rather than of the nation; and, second, it remained largely dependent on the political and military decisions of the former colonial power.[59] Both characteristics were somewhat inter-related, to the point that whether Belgium engaged or abstained from Rwandan politics determined the margin of manoeuvre of the Rwandan government, especially as it came to decisions on how to deal with the on-going insecurity resulting from the quickly launched *Inyenzi* insurgency attacking from Tanzanian and Ugandan territory.

At independence in 1962 the Rwandan armed forces comprised a general staff and 15 *pelotons* of about 30 soldiers each, dispersed over the ten *préfectures* (formerly provinces), and commanded by 52 Belgian officers and NCOs.[60] Gradually the platoons were extended to eleven companies (of about 160 men each), but the deployment structure of the new Rwandan National Guard (GNR)[61] was identical to the Belgian Congo FP.

59 For a general discussion of this dependence see Crocker, Chester A (1974), *Military Dependence: The colonial legacy in Africa*, The Journal of Modern African Studies 12, 265-286

60 Lefèvre, Patrick and Jean Noël Lefèvre (2006), Les militaires belge et le Rwanda, 1916-2006, Editions Racine, Bruxelles, p.109

61 *Garde nationale rwandaise*

Table 6: Rwandan National Guard – Belgian television broadcast 1 July 1962[62]

Ten of these companies were *forces territoriales,* while one was a reserve company, comparable to the FP's *forces campées.* The latter was garrisoned in Kigali. By the end of the decade the GNR was 2,500 strong, supported by a National police of about 1,200 personnel.[63] A battalion-level configuration was not in sight before the early 1970s. However, thanks to Belgian cooperation, by 1970 the order of battle (see table below) was already quite advanced.

In terms of personnel the army did not represent the whole of the nation. In July 2011 the former FAR[64] colonel Emmanuel Neretse explained that the fact that Northerners had been recruited as cadets mostly was by accident, because no other applicants were forthcoming at the time.[65] He insisted that there was no directive concerning the origin of the prospective cadets; however, recruiting occurred in a single recruitment office in Ruhengeri, in the

62 Source EUscreen, www.euscreen.eu/play.jsp?id=EUS_46C8DC9CD7F141B6A0CBD207601C3A20

63 Nyrop, Richard F, et al. (1969), Area Handbook for Rwanda, Government Printing office, Washington DC, pp.184f

64 *Forces armées rwandaises* (FAR) was the name given to the forces in 1974

65 The first cohort included five Northerners and two from Kigali, one of them a Tutsi

extreme North, where support for the President was strongest, which may explain the 'accidental' result to some degree.[66]

According to the former Rwandan secretary for defence, James Gasana, the FAR of 1990 included a number of Tutsi, among them one colonel, two lieutenant colonels, and seven majors. Still, given a size of the force of 8,000 in 1990, these figures rather seem to confirm the tribal selectivity regarding military career making rather than contradicting it.[67]

The loyalty of the GNR soldiers went primarily to one group, the Hutu, and its leader Kayibanda, rather than to the Constitution. The GNR, as stated by a high ranking officer of the Rwandan armed forces, saw its '*endroit',* the French term for positioning in time and place, as on the side of one ethnic group, which it had to protect and separate from another ethnic group.[68] Although the selection process for the military formation (NCO & officers) was in the hand of the Belgians, when the resulting lists of admission examinations were sent to the general staff, the names of men suspected to be Tutsi were crossed out.[69] Few Tutsi made it to officer's rank, and those who did often hid behind false Hutu identities.[70]

Regarding command and control, the initial plan was to progress slowly in the 'Africanisation' of the forces. A suggestion made by UN mandate transition

66 Although Neretse is the main military historian of the FAR, from the former regime's perspective, he was refused by the ICTR chamber III against Zigiranyirazo the status as expert witness, because he had been a battalion commander during the genocide, see case ICTR-01-73-T

67 Gasana, James (2002), Rwanda: du parti-état à l'état-garnison, l'Harmattan, Paris, p.33

68 Interview RW 2 in Kigali June 2011

69 At the second promotion in 1964, Joachim Muramutsa was barred from studies in Belgium because his fiancé was Tutsi, see Rusagara, et al. (2009), p.164

70 Among the high ranking officers from the first promotion only one was Tutsi: Lt. Colonel Epimaque Ruhashyia, a close friend of Habyrimana, and co-conspirator of the *coup d'état* of 1973. Other Tutsi officers hid behind false identities, like Commandant Mugabo, who was actually Tutsi but managed to obtain a Hutu ID card. FAR Col. Ruhashya later became military advisor to the Rwandan president. He died in exile in Brussels in February 2010, interview Be 6 with Colonel Pettiaux, Head of military cooperation in Rwanda during the First and Second Republic, Feb 2012. According to this officer's estimates about 20 per cent of Tutsi used wrong ID documents

observers at independence – swiftly to replace Belgian officers with Rwandan ones – was rejected by Kigali. The prevailing scheme was to train a new generation of Rwandan loyalist officers, thereby ensuring a certain balance between former FP and new generation of Rwandan loyalist officers.

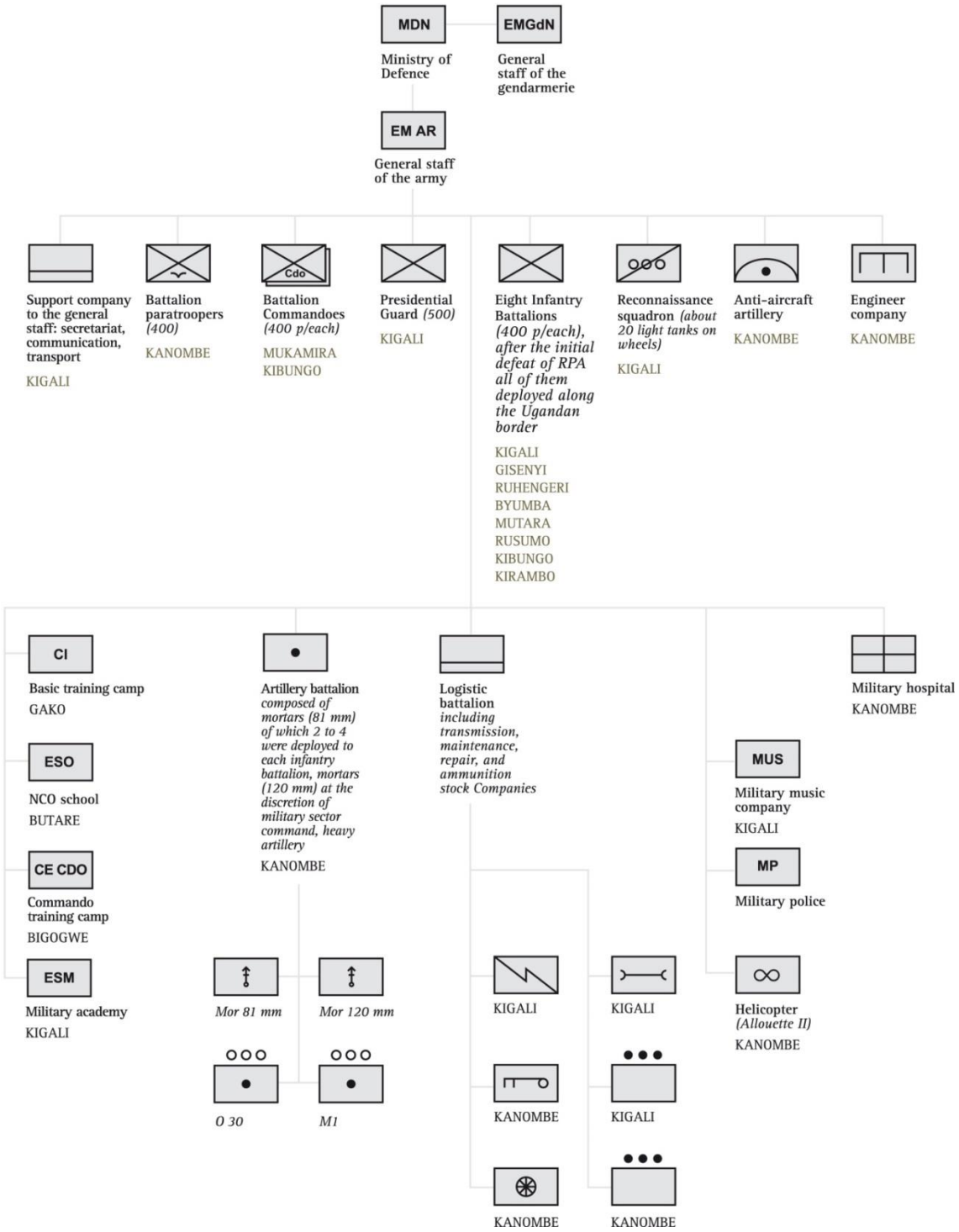

Table 7: Rwandan order of battle 1970, courtesy of Colonel André Vincent

In practice the troops were under the command recruits.[71] In practice the troops were under the command of Belgian officers down to company level throughout the 1970s.[72]

Eventually, the need to intensify the counter-insurgency campaign against the *Inyenzi* made it desirable to speed up the transition of responsibility at the level of the military upper echolons. The first Rwandan commander of the GNR, Juvénal Habyrimana, took over from his Belgian predecessor Vanderstraeten in 1963 instead of 1965 as was originally foreseen,[73] and the first Rwandan *Chef d'Etat-major* (CdEM), a lieutenant upon taking up his post in 1963, was quickly promoted to captain and then, within less than a year, reached the rank of major.[74]

A general evaluation of the armed forces of Rwanda between 1962 and 1975 gives a mixed picture. According to contemporary witnesses, the soldiers were generally disciplined and obedient and there was no corruption.[75] They were, however, not very effective militarily. Combat experience did compensate to some degree for the poor quality of the training when the GNR fought back against the low density guerrilla incursions of the Inyenzi, eventually defeating them by 1967.[76]

In sum, Rwanda's First Republic was an unruly era. President Kayibanda's attempt to secure his rule on the basis of a non-inclusive domestic political order set the scene for repeated acts of inter-ethnic violence, pogroms

71 Lefèvre and Lefèvre (2006), p.109

72 Interview RW 5 with Colonel André Vincent, Brussels 2012

73 Habyarimana was among the first group of ten Rwandan cadets to be trained as officers in Belgium between 1959 and 1962.

74 The first Rwandan commander of the 1962-founded officer school became Fabien Gahimano in 1972 (Exil 1994). 'Second' in command remained a Belgian officer, who donned a Rwanda uniform, interview Rw 2 with Major General Paul Rwarakabije, Kigali, 2011

75 By contrast, Rwandan soldiers despised Congolese soldiers as 'a bunch of gangsters', converstaions with four expatriate military advisors, Brussels, February 2010 to May 2011, anonymised

76 Belgian military coopérants confirmed (Be 6) that during four promotions, the military academy (Ecole supérieure) did not function properly

and counter strikes, whereby not only the Tutsi but also oppositional Hutu monarchists were hunted down.[77] Whilst the military was easily instrumentalised to carry out the ethnically divisive policies of the political leadership, it gradually built grievances against the regime in other areas, eventually leading to the removal of President Kayibanda in 1973, using the continuous tension between Hutu and Tutsi ethnicies as a pretext.

1.4 The Second Republic

The takeover of the Government by the commander of the armed forces since 1963, Major-General Juvénal Habyarimana, in 1973, established the Second Republic. Habyarimana consolidated his rule by further concentrating power, reinforcing and hijacking the one-party state he had inherited from his predecessor by creating his own party, the Movement for Development (MRND).[78] Parallel state and party structures to monitor and control the population reached down to the most local level. Membership in the party became compulsory in 1975. Simultaneously the *Interahamwe*, a youth organisation, was created to mobilise support for the party'[79] Communal work was widely reintroduced. The late 1970s to early 1980s were the closest that pre-genocide Rwanda came to direct rule conditions. The MRND, however, as much as it was an instrument of political control, increasingly became the channel to establish and maintain a clientele hierarchy and concentrate wealth in the hands of the party elite.[80]

Over the years the rings of the patronage system became ever narrower, with power and wealth increasingly concentrated in the hands of a small group, called the 'little house' (*akazu* in Kinyirwanda), consisting of the inner circle

77 Especially members of the constitutional-monarchist party UNAR, Logiest (1988), p.47

78 Turner (2007), p.37

79 The Interahamwe, later armed and trained, would become (in)famous for its role in the subsequent genocide, but originally it was merely an instrument of political mobilisation

80 Gasana (2002), p.342

personal clientele of the president and his wife. Some of the key military actors, not surprisingly, were part of this inner core, as the army's main recruiting ground, the North Eastern region of Ruhengeri, was also the home region of the President's family. As an important consequence, this power shift jeopardised the delicate balance among Hutu elites which had controlled the country since independence. The North of the country, which traditionally provided the military leadership, while the South was home too much of the political, economic and intellectual elite. Intra-regime criticism therefore began simmering, with those left-out lamenting the creeping nepotism in the economy, bureaucracy, and important religious institutions.[81] But tensions, pitted not just the North against the South. Ancient sub-regional intra-elite confrontations, some of which dated back to pre-colonial melees, awoke. For instance, the former Foreign Secretary, Lt. Col. Alois Nsekaliye, a Hutu from the North, who belongs to a family rivalling that of president Habyarimana since medieval times, at some point joined the RPF forces in Uganda in order to continue an inter-family feud.[82]

Although the new regime promised an end to violence between Hutu and Tutsi it very soon joined into 'scapegoating' the Tutsi minority. Throughout his reign, Habyarimana was able to maintain his grip on power through a delicate 'divide-and-rule' policy,[83] buttressed by the influx of increasingly significant support from its new international patron, France, which gradually supplanted Belgium as the main provider of both military and non-military assistance to Rwanda.

On the domestic front, holding at bay the discontent of some of the Hutu groups whilst neutralising the Tutsi threat and all without alarming international

81 The term in Kinyarwanda to describe the phenomenon, politoiki y'inda literally means Politics of the Belly

82 Interview Co 5 with Colonel André Vincent, Brussels 2012

83 Turner (2007)

backers, meant alternating repression and co-optation. Thus, in 1978 an ethnic quota system was introduced for all high level government posts according to the proportions of the total population. Tutsis were thus allocated 15 per cent of the posts, and Twa a few, as they represented a negligible minority. At the same time, witnesses to the period describe recurring 'Srebrenica-like events' with Tutsi soldiers and civilians being carried away on military trucks, never to be seen again.[84] Overall, however, to use a European comparison, the atmosphere seems to have been closer to the climate under the 1935 German 'Nuremberg Laws' than to that of the 1938 pogroms ('Kristallnacht').[85]

The massive influx of development aid, especially from France, during this period from 1975 to 1985 largely helped maintain social peace in a context of bare food sufficiency for the masses and visible enrichment of the few.[86]

French military support to Rwanda was inaugurated by the signature of an official defence cooperation agreement in 1975. The agreement, the clauses of which remained secret (as was the case for most French defence agreements across Africa at the time),was to provide the basis for increasingly intensive cooperation as of 1981, spurred by the personal friendship between President Habyarimana and the family of the French President Mitterrand. As a result, French advisors gradually side-lined Belgian ones at the supreme command level over the 1980s.[87] Meanwhile, important centripetal and centrifugal forces had been reshaping the security forces. On the one hand, the participation of the top military leadership in the regime clientele system trickled down to the lowest level, leading to ever-increasing corruption and,

84 One of the victims was the witness's aide-de-camp, whom he could not successfully shield; Colonel Pettiaux, Feb. 2012

85 Kristallnacht, German for 'night of the broken glass, 9 November 1938, which represented racist 'popular pogroms' actually centrally organised by the government

86 International assistance amounted to about half of the national budget in the 1980s; Wallis, Andrew (2006), Silent Accomplice The Untold Story of France's Role in the Rwandan Genocide Tauris, London, p.16

87 Interview Rw 5 with a Belgian former military advisor

with it, the waning of military discipline. Thus, the quality of military units decreased, and criminal acts by soldiers became more and more of a problem.[88] On the other hand, a concentration of coercive power was completed as the national police was incorporated into the military directly after the coup of July 1973,[89] but a new para-military *gendarmerie* was subsequently created in 1976, basically under French military surveillance.[90] By this means the President made sure that he would directly command all security forces separately.

In the late 1980s Habyarimana's increasingly vulnerable hold on power was shaken from multiple directions. First, a poor harvest and food shortages in 1988/89 increased popular discontent at growing wealth inequalities and ubiquitous nepotism and corruption, boosting the popularity of opposition forces at home and abroad. Second, with the 'winds of change' from Eastern Europe sweeping Africa, the regime had no choice but to accept the transformation of Rwanda's one-party state into a multi-party democracy in July 1990. Third, Rwandans who had borne much of the fighting for Yoweri Museveni's successful guerrilla campaign in Uganda were under growing pressure to leave the country without the expected reward of Ugandan citizenship that they had expected. Sensing at the same time the weakness of the government in Kigali, the Tutsi diaspora decided that the moment was appropriate to attempt an invasion of Rwanda.[91]

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88 Soldiers occasionally worked as hired guns or in similar mafia-like activities; Interview Rw 7 with Major Willem de Kant, former aide de camp of UNAMIR commander Dallaire

89 Neretse, Emmanuel (2010), Grandeur et décadence des Forces Armées Rwandaise Editions Sources du Nil, Lille, p.29

90 When fighting increased the French overseers were equipped with Rwandan uniforms to hide their level of involvement, see Rusagara, et al. (2009), p.161; comparing before and after 1970, Belgian arms deliveries went from 6 to 0 per cent whilst French arms increased from 16.5 to near 70 per cent of Rwandan imports, figures from Luckham (1982), p.62

91 see Museveni, Yoweri (1997), Sowing the Mustard Seed: the Struggle for Freedom and Democracy in Uganda, Macmillan Publishers, London; Waugh, Colin M (2004), Paul Kagame and Rwanda; Power, Genocide, and the Rwandan Patriotic Front, McFarland, Jefferson NC, chapters 2,3

1.5 Civil War and Genocide

The invading RPA was, according to a Belgian report at the time, an experienced, highly motivated, disciplined, logistically autonomous, and well-equipped force.[92] Indeed, the core of the forces penetrating Rwanda under the command of Frank Rwigema, a descendent of Rwandese refugees of the 1959 genocide, carried much combat experience in their bullet pouch. During the Ugandan civil war from 1979 to 1987 they had fought for Museveni as guerrillas against Kampala's regular forces. They had then become part of the new Ugandan regular army, with Fred Rwigema becoming chief of the Ugandan staff.[93] The head of Ugandan military intelligence at the time was Paul Kagame, who had returned from his studies at Fort Leavensworth, Kansas, to take part in the assault on Rwanda.[94] Prior to their Ugandan experience, some of the Rwandan refugees, including Rwigema himself, had also gone through ideological and practical training with Frelimo in Mozambique and the South African ANC.

In contrast to the FAR, which had become a politicised army, the RPA was a political army. It was motivated by a high degree of self-esteem as a revolutionary organisation.[95] The RPA, however, was cautious not to appear as a force for the reestablishment of the monarchy. In fact, 30 per cent of the RPA forces invading Rwanda were actually Hutu soldiers.[96]

In 1990, government forces, including the Gendarmerie, were about 8,000 strong. According to the Belgian report mentioned above, although their

92 Personal archive of a Belgian officer, the document reads: une force bien entrainée, motivée, disciplinée, autonome logistiquement et dotée d'un armement significatif

93 At the Rwandan MoD footage was presented to this author that showed Museveni decorating his second in command Rwigema in presence of visiting president Habyrimana of Rwanda. In hindsight this was interpreted by the Rwandan interlocutors as a 'shot over the stern' of Habyrimana

94 Waugh (2004), pp.42f

95 Rw 10 Interview at the Ministry of Defence, Historical Department (CHR), Kigali, April 2011

96 Kaarsholm (2006), p.85, Reyntjens, Filip (1994), L'Afrique des grand lacs en crise: Rwanda, Burundi 1988-1994, Karthala, Paris, p.91

doctrine was oriented at interstate warfare, they did not possess any of the material means and soft skills actually to implement it. The report points to insufficient logistics, lack of flexibility in command and control, vulnerability of forces, and low reaction and responsiveness.[97] Even after the FAR ballooned to 30,000 personnel, forming 28 new battalions by 1993, this could not compensate for a relative lack of efficiency. Even if the Belgian assessment tends to over-estimate the strength of the RPA and underestimate the FAR's, the central argument that the invading force was much more combat effective than the defending FAR holds.

Actually, the initial attack in the North took the FAR by surprise, as only units considered less reliable were garrisoned in that part of the country, and the initial onslaught could only be repelled thanks to the French.[98] Expatriate and Rwandan observers were very surprised when this armed force had to be rescued by French forces. After all, the fact that the FAR was trained and supported by French, and German military advisors had been taken as an indicator of reputable military capacities.[99]

With the death of General Rwigema on day two of the fighting, 2 October 1990, Paul Kagame took command. The RPA, which had tried to battle as a conventional force, was repulsed and had to withdraw to the Rwandan Ruhengeri wilderness, reverting to guerrilla warfare. As a guerrilla force, it had experience from earlier overmastering the regular Ugandan force of Milton Obote.

97 In the original: moyens logistiques et élément de transmission lourds et vulnérables, procédures de commandement peu réactive et lentes

98 Conversation with an RPA veteran on relevant intelligence gathered before the attack; see also on French Opération Noroît, Admiral Lanxande, René (2001), Quand le monde a basculé, Editions Sources du Nil, Paris, pp.162ff

99 The fact that the FAR troops garrisoned in the remote border region next to Uganda were basically penal companies of the most undisciplined troops contributed to their initial failure

The RPA was able to establish a foothold to regroup for a protracted asymmetric campaign which remained relatively successful until 1993, as the FAR leadership followed the ill-adapted French advice to wage a Maginot-line style defence war, which was outmanoeuvred by more flexible RPA tactics.[100] French support was vital to enabling the FAR to build up and to resist RPA's attacks. France reportedly pre-financed military aid amounting to a total of $US100 million.[101]

From 1990 onward, two armies had been claiming to represent the country.[102] Tellingly both sides used pre-colonial regimental names for their combat units – the FAR even did so despite its anti-monarchist pro-Hutu orientation. For its part, the RPA chose the traditional regimental name *Inkonotanyi*, which means 'those who fight valiantly'.[103] By 1993, both sides had built up their forces, reaching about 25,000 for the RPA and about 30,000 for the FAR.

The political dynamics in the country, however, were to be significantly affected by the agreement worked out in Arusha (Tanzania) in August 1993 under the auspices of the OAU, France, and the USA, to try to put an end to the Rwandan civil war. The Arusha agreement had resulted in a power sharing accord with important military and political consequences. On the military front, the agreement foresaw a merger of the two armies and representation of both sides in command structures, thus granting a disproportionally high number of command positions to RPA officers. The rank and file themselves had to be

100 Interview with a Belgian military contemporary witness, May 2013, Brussels

101 Austin, Kathi (1999), *Light weapons and conflict in the Great Lakes region in Africa.* , in Boutwell, Jeffrey and Klare, Michael T, Light weapons and civil conflict: controlling the tools of violence Rowman and Littlefield, New York, 29-47, p.34; French extraordinary support was attributed to Mitterrand's strong Fashoda Complex, a form of inferiority complex resulting from French frustration about being second to England in Africa

102 See Mills, Greg (2008), *The Boot is now on the Other Foot: Rwanda's Lessons from Both Sides of Insurgency*, RUSI Journal, 153, 3, 72-78

103 Their enemies preferred to call the Inyenzi Inkonotanyi to make the link with the 1960s generation of Tutsi incursions. The name stuck.

integrated in a relative proportion of 60 per cent government forces and 40 per cent RPA forces. As regards high government posts, the incumbent party and the RPF each were assigned five ministers; other oppositional parties would obtain eleven posts in total, including that of Prime Minister. This meant the loss of a large number of senior civilian and military positions by the ruling MRND.

In general, the kind of power-sharing envisaged by Arusha went much beyond the kind of proportionality the government had paid lip service to in the past, as the Tutsi represented less than 20 per cent of the population. This was unacceptable to broad circles among the Hutu, whose existence depended on access to power and wealth via the state. Emerging opposition parties, some expressively Hutu, quickly organised into a coalition and negotiated the installation of an oppositional Prime Minister.[104] The moment was perceived as a warning by the inner *akazu* circle, who saw the establishment of a more institutionalised system of checks and balances as a threat to its privileges. Although the opposition was blamed for destroying the nation's unity and peace, it is obvious that the wave of political unrest that ensued was deliberately unleashed by the government and the party's youth organisation, the *Interahamwe.*[105] The security forces, including both the military and the police, played an important role in enacting the violence.[106] For January 1993 alone, Human Rights Watch counted 'more than 300 Tutsi and members of political parties opposed to [the] Rwandan President' killed by private militia, with another 147 civilians killed by the Rwandan military. Hundreds more

104 See Reyntjens (1994), pp.89-130; see also Newbury, Catherine (1992), *Rwanda, Recent Debates over Governance and Rural Development*, in Hyden, Goran and Bratton, Michael, Governance and Politics in Africa Lynne Rienner, Boulder, , pp.193-219

105 Kinyarwanda for 'those who work together'

106 ADL (1992), Rapport sur les droits de l'homme au Rwanda, Septembre 1991 - Septembre 1992 Association rwandaise pour la défense des droits de la personne et des libertés publiques, Kigali

civilians were reportedly 'beaten, raped or arrested' by FAR personnel.[107] Actually, the military had started collecting lists of Tutsi as early as 1991, and it provided *Interahamwe* militias with arms and training.[108] This would later enable the *génocidaires* to act with upmost efficiency once the 'go ahead' for the killings had been given.

On 6 April 1994, President Habyarimana was killed – in circumstances that remain controversial – the Arusha Accord collapsed, and hardliners in his government committed a coup, ordering the killing of moderate members of the cabinet, which gave the starting signal for a long-prepared genocide against the Tutsi minority.[109] The FAR and the MRND youth militia *Interahamwe* started systematic killings, whereby selective targets were attacked by FAR, whilst the militia aimed as the Tutsis of their respective neighbourhoods. Members of the Presidential Guard, members of the Para-Commando Battalion and the A-company of the Reconnaissance Battalion killed Prime Minister Agathe Uwilingiyimana and the ten Belgian peacekeepers deployed for her protection.[110] During the unfolding mass slaughter 937 000 identified civilians were murdered within 100 days.[111]

The *Interahamwe* was based on the nationwide MRND structure, at national, prefectural and communal levels. Although there was no official link between the *Interahamwe* and the Rwandan military, members of the Army and Presidential Guard trained, guided and supported the militia[112] and the

107 See HRW (1993), Beyond the Rhetoric - Continuing Human Rights Abuses in Rwanda, News from Africa Watch, 5, np

108 Against a widely perceived image, most victims of the genocide were not killed by machete but by hand grenades and gun fire

109 For a more detailed account of the genocide, see Braeckman, Colette (1994), Rwanda: Histoire d'un Génocide, Fayard, Bruxelles; Dallaire, Roméo and Brent Beardsley (2003), Shake hands with the devil : the failure of humanity in Rwanda, Random House Canada, Toronto; Gourevitch, Philip (1998), We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will be Killed With Our Families, Farrar, Straus & Giroux, New York; Mamdani (2002); Prunier, Gérard (1995), The Rwanda Crisis: History of a Genocide, 1959–1994, Hurst, London

110 www.haguejusticeportal.net/index.php?id=10445

111 www.cf.undp.org/munite_silence.htm

112 ICTR-01-74-T

central role of the FAR in the mass murder is beyond doubt. UN Special Rapporteur Bacre Ndiaye reported already in April 1993 that FAR was committing massacres and giving logistic support to extra-judicial killings.[113] Later on, the International Criminal Tribunal on Rwanda (ICTR) collected ample evidence of FAR soldiers and units participating in massacres against Rwandan civilians or coordinating with militia killings at roadblocks.

A typical case may illustrate this. On 11 April, thousands of Tutsi fled from the *École Technique Officielle* (ETO) grounds in Kigali after the Belgian peacekeepers had withdrawn their protection. The refugees were stopped by members of the Para-Commando Battalion. Members of the battalion and *Interahamwe* then marched the refugees several kilometers to Nyanza hill, where they were shot. *Interahamwe* then killed the survivors with edged weapons, butts and clubs. The next day the pattern was repeated with the killing of 60 civilians at an educational institute in the adjunct Remera area.[114] Most notorious among the military personnel involved is probably Théoneste Bagosora, who had a career in high command positions before he was appointed Cabinet Director to the Minister of Defence in 1992. He remained chief organiser of the *Interahamwe* militias until he fled the country in July 1994. With Bagosora in place, the military belonged to the core of those who masterminded the genocide and then facilitated its execution. Bagosora himself gave the order for the killing of cabinet members via the military chain of command.[115] A majority of those accused of responsibility for coordinating

113 See Ndiave, Bacre Waly (1993), *United Nations Report by the Special Rapporteur on his Mission to Rwanda from 8 to 17 April 1993*, E /CN.4 /1994/ 7/Add.1, 11 August,

114 The events at L'Institut Africain et Mauricien de Statistiques et d'Economie belong to the few reported of Rwandan gendarmerie defending people against the génocidaires, even if only temporarily successful, Desforges (1999), p.314

115 According to the evidence, he ordered Major Ntabakuze, the commander of the Battalion Para-commando, Major Nzuwonemeye, the commander of the Battalion de reconnaissance, and Lt-Col Nkundiye, a commander of the Presidential Guard units, to work up a list of politicians to be executed

genocide, however, were civil servants, mostly *bourgmestres*, who depended on the cooperation of the military and militias.[116]

Among the 38 closed cases of the Arusha tribunal, active soldiers at the time of the genocide, for example Ildephonse Hategekimana, were a minority.[117] During the events in 1994, this soldier was a lieutenant and commander of the Ngoma Military Camp in Butare préfecture.[118] His military co-conspirators had either fled to the DRC out of reach of legal prosecution or were put on trial directly in Rwanda. Other cases of soldiers allegedly involved in the killings were suspended, including for example that of General Léonidas Rusatira, who was accused of having organised death squadrons to kill opposition politicians. Tracing former FAR after 1994 is difficult. The only detailed list with information of the whereabouts of 401 ex-FAR officers from the rank of general down to chief warrant officer has circulated since 2009 among oppositional Rwandans.[119] It names 17 officers and one NCO as 'political prisoners of the UN in Arusha', meaning the International Tribunal on Rwanda. Of the remaining officers, 291 were either 'killed by RPA' between 1994 and 1996 or perished due to exposure in refugee camps of Eastern Congo or bad living conditions in exile elsewhere.[120] Twenty-two were reported killed in action during the civil war and six as having died in so-called 'operations to liberate Rwanda' between 1997 and 2001, which points to their involvement in post-war incursions from Congolese territory. Sixty-five of the officers listed sooner or later joined the RPA.

116 See the case of Juvenal Kajelijeli ICTR-98-44A

117 ICTR-00-55

118 Butare, now Huye, is an important case because of their strong resistance against the killing. The army had to be brought in to finish what poorly armed militias were not able to achieve against determined resistance

119 For example of internet sites like Urwatubayaye and Amahoro Iwaku, see http://amahoroiwacu.blogspot.com.es/2010/12/situation-des-officiers-des-ex-far-et.html

120 Most were victims of retaliatory attacks from Rwanda into the Congo in this period

When the RPA/RPF eventually gained control of the country and the state by force, it established itself as the armed institution of the state. The FAR, having lost its war and the state, became a displaced military, waging a guerrilla campaign from Congolese territory.[121] Over time, the FAR and other *génocidaire* militia would form the FDLR, remaining to this day a thorn in the flesh of the Rwandese state and a permanent bone of contention in Rwandese-Congolese relations (see Chapter Three).

1.6 Rwanda's Post-genocide Armed Forces

The decade following the genocide was an unruly one for Rwanda, as the RPF/RPA strove to consolidate its control over the country.

Foremost among the threats to the new regime was the presence of an estimated one million refugees spread in camps along Rwanda's eastern border that were providing the strategic reserves and the political backing to the former FAR. Neutralising this threat would be Kigali's number one security policy priority in the post-genocide years, explaining the country's involvement in the First and Second Congo Wars, from November 1996 to May 1997 and from August 1998 to July 2003, respectively. This included backing the AFDL of Laurent Désiré Kabila against the regime of President Mobutu, who was suspected of protecting the FAR, and repatriating more than a million civil war refugees, who constituted an almost unlimited potential recruitment reserve for the FDLR.[122] This also included, in an almost immediate subsequent stage, taking sides against AFDL, using the proxy force of Jean-Pierre Bemba's MLC. The second Congo war (1998-2003), initiated by Rwanda and Uganda,

121 See Mills (2008)

122 See Afoaku, Osita (2002), *Congo's Rebels: Their Origins, Motivations, and Strategies*, in Clark, John F, The Africa Stakes of the Congo War Macmillan, New York, 109-128; Reyntjens, Filip (2009), The Great African War: Congo and Regional Geopolitics, 1996-2006, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge; the analogy of the Palestinian refugee camps was pointed out by Luttwak (1979), p.42

developed into what has been called the African Great War,[123] involving half a dozen states, eventually leaving eastern Congo in a state of chronic insecurity.[124]

During the Second Congo War, the Rwandan regular army numbered about 40,000 troops (external estimates range up to 64,000). While there had been some demobilisation after 1996, troops had also been recruited in about equivalent numbers to the demobilised soldiers (about 15,000).[125]

The role of the post-genocide Rwandan armed forces, renamed Rwandan Defence Forces (RDF) in 2002, however, has not been limited to defending the nation against external aggression. It has also played a vital role as an instrument for the reintegration of large groups of former combatants or sympathisers who could have constituted a threat for the new political and security order.

An important instrument to that end has been an endogenously-developed Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration process (DDR), based on a combination of traditional approaches and modern indoctrination methods. Calling upon the pre-colonial *Ingando* (gathering) tradition, by which soldiers preparing for a military campaign would gather to subdue, or mute, their eventual disputes before the fight,[126] the modern *Ingando* re-integration programme has taken the shape of a re-orientation for those who had left Rwanda or had been born in exile in the Congo rainforest and whose

123 A term coined by Shearer (2007), see also Autesserre, Séverine (2008), *The trouble with Congo - How local disputes fuel regional conflict*, Foreign Affairs, 87, 3, 94-110

124 See Prunier, Gérard (2009), Africa's World War: Congo, the Rwandan Genocide, and the Making of a Continental Catastrophe, Oxford University Press, Oxford; Prunier, Gérard (2009), From Genocide to Continental war : the 'Congolese' Conflict and the Crisis of Contemporary Africa, Hurst, London; Turner (2007)

125 See Sidiropoulos, Elizabeth (2002), *Eight Years After the Genocide*, African Security Review Vol 11 No 3, 2002, 11, 3, np online edition

126 Interview Rw 3 with Major Nyirimandzi Gerard on DDR, May 2011

worldview had been shaped by the FDLR.[127] Meant to instil confidence and goodwill, the approach is determined, but works through persuasion and indoctrination rather than coercion. Camp Mutobo in Ruhengeri, for example, where most ex-FDLR soldiers arrive,[128] is open. On the first weekend after arrival, even before the programme has started, the ex-combatants get some pocket money and are allowed to visit family members in Rwanda unsupervised. After four days, the person has to return and training starts. This demonstrative leap of faith has proven very successful. The process, overall, has been quite successful, so that by 2010 the FDR included an approximate parity of former FAR or former RPA personnel (also taking into account the arrival of new generations of soldiers with no a priori affiliation to one or the other side).[129] *Ingando* was an experiment, based on indigenous tools, but facing new challenges.[130] The first step in *Ingando* is to help ex-combatants and the RDF unburden themselves emotionally. The difficulty of discussing what people feel about the conflict and about each other is an important barrier that must first be removed. This means, as all ranks were concerned, that a former RPA soldier and victor would have to accept orders from a man he defeated, and vice versa: any officer might have to accept his own authority over the man who defeated him. Joint combat experience was a way to overcome such difficulties.

127 This author met several ex-FDLR at a re-education camp near Ruhengeri who were 16 or 17 and had left the bush only two days earlier. Some of them were illiterate, speaking only Kinyirwanda, whilst others could operate computers and spoke French. Interviews at Camp Mutobo, May 2011

128 Disarmament is done by MONUSCO. Child soldiers are brought to a UNICEF supported camp at Lake Muhazi, an hour's drive from Kigali, for similar MINALOC programmes, http://blog.unicef.ie/2011/05/sylvains-story-a-former-child-soldiers-on-the-road-to-a-new-life-in-rwanda/

129 Reintegration goes beyond mere demobilisation. Between September 1997 and April 2011 18,692 former RPA, 12,969 ex FAR, and 9,215 ex-armed group members from the Congo were demobilised. 26,585 RDF soldiers were demobilised since 2002, Rwanda Demobilisation and Reintegration Commission, see demobrwanda.org.rw/background.html

130 Interview RW 1 General Rusagara, London, March 2013

The integration process had started from the first assault in 1990 on, and it continued throughout the wars that Rwandan soldiers participated in until the joint Congolese-Rwandan operation Ujoma Wetu in 2009. Captured, repatriated, and otherwise convinced former FAR in large numbers joined the RPA and then the RDF. They actually represented the majority of Rwandan soldiers fighting in the Second Congo war between 1998 and 2003. By the end of the Second Congo war 60 per cent of the Rwandan fighting force comprised former FAR and militias, while the rest were RPA and new recruits. *Ingando* has had three finished phases so far, the first from 1995 to 1997 with a total of 8,097 FAR and militias reintegrated into the new regular armed forces; phase two in 1998 and 1999 with 26,092; and phase three with 11,159 reintegrated respectively (a total of 45,348 soldiers in seven years).[131] Once these soldiers returned from service to their more hesitant – as will be discussed below – civilian communities, they carried strong support for reconciliation and the new narrative of Rwandaness. The army thus becomes a spearhead of the progress.

The reintegration process, however, has not been conceived with a military focus alone. First, civilians have also been sent to reintegration courses (at Knumba). Second, those former FDLR fighters who have been redirected to civilian life have also received a high degree of attention. Integration in a military environment is much easier than in a civilian one, because it cannot so easily be controlled. Incentives are more practical in nature because, among returnees and occupants of once abandoned property, economic resources are at risk, a fact that does not apply among soldiers. As a result the abolition of old settlement structures through villagisation was a way

131 Data from research files of F. Rusagara's thesis project at SOAS London

to avoid this struggle (see 2.1.2). It remains a task to be fulfilled because economic inequality cannot be wished away.

2 The Military in Rwanda's Post-Genocide History: from Weak to Strong State

The contemporary Rwandan political project is to overcome, once and for all, the inter-ethnic division that brought the country to the abyss in 1994. All forces at the leadership's disposal have been mobilised at the service of this project, focussing on national reconciliation, consolidation of direct rule as a core state-building strategy, and the economic modernisation of the country. Among them, the military has played a particularly important role as it was for some time the only tool available. Twenty years after the genocide, defence forces continue to play an important role as a pillar of the state, but they are gradually emancipating themselves from their political role as the state is acquiring an identity distinct from that of the party.

2.1 Re-founding the Nation and (re-)building the State

Post-genocide Rwanda is an experiment in state building, but also in social and cultural change. That change has been carried out under the leadership of a determined military and political leader, Paul Kagame.[132] Post-genocide Rwanda is only understandable taking in account Kagame's role, however, being closer to that of a charismatic revolutionary statesman like Atatürk who similarly lifted his country from its collapse than to Mobutu, who led his into chaos.

132 See Kinzer, Stephen (2008), A Thousand Hills: Rwanda's Rebirth and the Man Who Dreamt It, John Wiley & Sons, Hoboken; Waugh (2004)

2.1.1 Building a Post-ethnic Identity

Inkonotanyi, the reconstruction of Rwandan unity has been part of the 'Eight point' constitutive programme of the RPF from the beginning.[133] Accordingly, the eradication of any tribal differentiation in law or in collective consciousness has been a priority of the regime as of 1994, at the root of what appears to be a true cultural revolution.

This eradication, first, is anchored in the Constitution, which includes among the 'fundamental principles of governance [...] the fight against the ideology of genocide and the eradication of ethnic and regional divisions'.[134] Second, it has been relentlessly pursued via the introduction of a new historical narrative aimed at silencing divisive ethnic rhetoric and thereby creating a space for interethnic healing. A country-wide Unity and Reconciliation Commission conducted numerous public meetings, debates, and lectures for some years to spread a common and mainstreamed appreciation of Rwandan history, at the same time as it provided a space for dialogue on the legacy of bad governance and ethnic cleansing. Since 2002 the national consensus-building process through dialogue has been pursued in a different form via the annual *Umushyikirano* national consultation. Calling upon the *Ingando* gathering tradition, *Umushyikirano* begun at an administrative level and was later (2009) opened to ordinary Rwandans who can participate via internet, telephone, sms and radio.

Second, the government's effort 'to transform how Rwandans understand their social identities, to deconstruct ethnic identities and replace them with a unified national identity'[135] seems to be aiming at the creation of a *post-ethnic*

133 Homepage of the RPF programme, www.rpfinkotanyi.org/en/index.php/about-us/political-program?lang=

134 Constitution of Rwanda, Chapter II, article 9

135 See Longman and Rutagengwa (2004), online edition, np

society.[136] Rwandan historians, who originally constructed the new national narrative aligning with RPF's intentions, are aware both of the ambiguities of history and of the fact that pre-colonial Rwanda was not a heaven of social justice.[137] The key idea, however, is to not get it 'historically right' but to provide elements around which a common post-ethnicity identity can be aggregated. This method resembles that of European historians who powerfully contributed to the construction of nations in the 19th century direct heritage of 'ancient Germanic' unity or the universal Roman-Christian Empire.[138] Third, genuine efforts to overcome the wounds of the genocide have been made, in particular through the *gacaca* process, amply documented elsewhere.[139]

Political symbolism, however, has also had its share in this policy. In 2001 the government adopted a new flag, a new national anthem, and a new national seal, claiming that the old national symbols had been tainted by the genocide and new symbols were necessary to mark a break with the past.[140] Shortly thereafter (2002) the decision, to change the official name of the armed forces from the French *Forces armées rwandaises* into the British English spelling 'Rwandan Defence Forces'[141] was more than symbolic, as it marked an important geo-strategic reorientation away from the Francophone world and towards East Africa. This reorientation was consummated in 2008 when the

136 McDoom, Omar Shahabudin (2011), *Rwanda's Exit Pathway from Violence: a Startegic Assessment*, World Development Report 2011, World Bank, 62054, p.13, 3

137 Interview Rw 10 with the Ministry of Defence, Historical Department, Kigali, April 2011

138 Even Russia claimed to base its historic roots as the 'Third Rome', see Schaeder, Hildegard (1957), Moskau das dritte Rom : Studien zur Geschichte der politischen Theorien in der slavischen Welt, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, Darmstadt, and Hobsbawm, Eric and Terrence Ranger (2012), The Invention of Tradition, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge

139 See Corey, Allison and Sandra Joireman (2004), *Retributive Justice: The Gacaca Courts in Rwanda*, African Affairs, 103, 410, 73-98; Ingelaere, Bert (2008), *The Gacaca courts in Rwanda*, in Luc Huyse, Luc and Salter, Mark, Traditional Justice and Reconciliation after Violent Conflict Learning from African Experiences International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, Stockholm, 25-59; Sarkin, Jeremy (2001), *The Tension between Justice and Reconciliation in Rwanda: Politics, Human Rights, Due Process and the Role of the Gacaca Courts in Dealing with the Genocide*, Journal of African Law, 45, 2, 143-172; Schabas, William A (2005), *Genocide Trials and Gacaca Courts*, Journal of International Criminal Justice, 3, 4, 879-895

140 Longman and Rutagengwa (2004), np

141 By Law No 19/2002 of 17/05/2002

official language of education was changed from French to English, in a move reminiscent of Ataturk's decision to abandon Arabic for European style writing in Turkey, marking the break with the Ottoman empire. In Rwanda, French had been the language of the governing elites from Belgian rule until the end of the Habyarimana regime, and there was no more tangible accommodation with the charged past other than abandoning it.

This cultural and political reengineering has been greatly facilitated by Rwanda's deep-rooted practices of state-centred social control. In a way, post-genocide Rwanda 'exhibits strong patterns of continuity with pre-genocide Rwanda'.[142] Somewhat ironically, whereas Rwanda's strong hierarchism had served to anchor patterns of authoritarianism and ethnic differentiation, it is now used by the new elites to 'facilitate cultural change by ordinance', since a population with a 'deeply-ingrained value of obedience' is mouldable for better or worse.[143] One must take into account, however, that in contemporary Rwanda, the dogged determination of the regime to overcome a divisive tribal narrative meets the mood on the ground as many people wish to leave their conflict-ridden past behind.[144]

2.1.2 Building the State

Rwanda has been described by Edward Newman as a 'hyper-Westfalian state', in the sense that it has extremely strong and well-organised institutions.[145] A in pre-colonial times, and in the First and Second Republics, contemporary Rwanda has an extraordinary state apparatus covering five strata of administration below the central government level – in a descending order,

142 Straus and Waldorf (2011), pp.14f

143 Prunier, Gérard (1999), The Rwanda Crisis: History of a Genocide, Fountain Publishers Ltd, Kampala, Uganda, p.248

144 In many conversions Rwandans told this author that they were content with the fact that 'Hutu-Tutsi-talk' is subdued

145 Newman, Edward (2009), *Failed States and International Order: Constructing a Post-Westfalian World*, Contemporary Security Policy, 30, 3, 421-443, p.424

the province, district, sector, cell, and finally village level, all of which have elected councils.[146] The dynamics of governance, however, have been radically transformed since 1994. As it has striven to erase the marks of the old order and rebuild the country, the regime has taken a long series of measures that appear as many steps to establish a direct-rule system. In many areas, the ongoing transformation in Rwanda is actually more reminiscent of the Weberian stage of the European state formation process than of contemporary post-conflict state-building processes.

An important, early step in this process has been the reconstruction of the civil administration. Forced to begin from scratch in 1994, this reconstruction has followed a path sharply contrasting with that of the previously prevailing patrimonial and nepotistic system. Former civil servants were carefully vetted and a minority rehired, but most ministries were staffed by new personnel, many of whom being returnees from the diaspora, but also very soon by a large number of very young people, recruited from the National University or abroad, from North America, Europe or Uganda.

More important perhaps for the institution of a new social and political order has been the resettlement of a large number of rural dwellers – who constitute the majority of the population – from the hills to new villages in valleys, accompanied by comprehensive land tenure and agricultural reform.[147] The so-called *villagisation* was undertaken with a combination of objectives in mind: first, to satisfy a dire need to house numerous returning refugees;[148] second, as a means to bring the modernity of electricity, sewage systems, clean water provision, etc. to the countryside more easily; third, to replace small

146 Elections at the two lowest levels are not secret, a point weakening the democratic legitimacy in Western eyes: district and sector level elections are indirect, provincial elections and national are direct and secret

147 Not everywhere, however, does the construction of new homes keep pace with the ambitious programme, causing much criticism of the government.

148 It must not be forgotten that, according to available statistics, Rwanda is the country with the largest population density in Africa

subsistence agriculture with more productive agribusiness and animal husbandry; and last, but not least, to facilitate direct control of the government over the population.[149] Although the experience is too recent to draw definitive and comprehensive conclusions,[150] it is already evident that the transfer of social control from the 'hill' to the 'village' has had an important impact on traditional clientelist structures. For example, with the introduction of land titles – meant to put an end to a history of permanent quarrel over the ownership of land – local leaders have been deprived of their traditional and informal privilege of certifying land ownership by *lettre de cachet*. Similarly, with the streamlining of bureaucratic procedures, the issuing of travel documents is now delegated to a one-stop institution and the stamps of village leaders have lost their legal value. [151] Local leaders have therefore seen most of their powers (and associated fees) escape them to the benefit of a centrally-managed civil service.[152]

Control, however, also has the meaning of 'accountability' and 'transparency' in the new Rwanda, in an overall drive to improve the professionalisation and effectiveness of administrative and public services. Thus, at the local government level, the government introduced the *Imihigo* process in 2006, by which civil servants are systematically judged according to their performance.[153] However, it is not the central government that sets the benchmarks but the local administration itself, which has to develop realistic

149 Straus and Waldorf (2011), p.9

150 Some observers, such as Catherine Newbury, consider that such social reengineering, driven by 'high-modernist ambitions', is bound to fail as it has failed elsewhere, Newbury, Catherine (2011), *High Modernism on the Ground Level*, in Straus, Scott and Waldorf, Lars, Remaking Rwanda University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, 223-239; see for the concept Scott, James (1998), Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed, Yale University Press, New Haven, CT

151 Kamana, Laurent (2013), *Why Stamps were Withdrawn from Village Leaders*, The New Times, 11 February. They were collected countrywide within two days in February 2013.

152 Carolyn Logan has demonsrated the importance of the control of land allocation for the resilience of traditional authorities, Logan (2013), pp.357f

153 Again, *Imihigo* is adapted from a pre-colonial Rwandan tradition where an individual sets personal targets to be achieved and challenges to be overcome within a specific period of time.

strategies to achieve its set objectives. The executives at the village level, sector, or district sign contracts with the government, and their performance is subject to semi-annual public evaluations.

2.1.3 Rwanda's Changing Structures of Power and Influence

The Rwandese leadership's authoritarian steering of cultural change and societal reorganisation, observed uncritically by Western governments, non-governmental organisations and academics for a good decade of post-genocide shame, has been eliciting more and more disapproval in the recent period.[154] The focus of the criticism actually bears on two different objects, depending on how close the observer is to field reality. More distant or generalist observers, mostly concentrate on the illiberalism of the regime, which would forbid the expression of free speech, severely sanction opponents,[155] and, actually, control the public space by constantly occupying it with centrally-staged phoney debates.[156] In their view, this would jeopardise Rwanda's transition from a doorstep nation to a fully open access order, the *sine qua non* condition for durable social peace.[157] Although not insensitive to the criticism,[158] the government retorts that its priority, in this still sensitive post-war and post-genocide phase, is economic and social development, pointing to its successes in this field and, by contrast, to the fact that the worst cases of mass violence in Rwanda coincided with its two more 'liberal' periods: at independence and after the Arusha accords. Internal and external critiques would therefore be mistaken in their appreciation of the factors of sustainable peace and stability in Rwanda.

154 Western governments' more critical stance is also linked to lingering suspicions, based on a series of United Nations reports, that Rwanda keeps playing an important role in instigating insecurity and in preventing peace in the Eastern DRC.

155 For example, opposition leader Victoria Ingabire's sentencing to eight years in prison for propagating ethnic propaganda

156 Typical of such criticism in the academic world is the series of articles in the volume by Straus and Waldorf (2011)

157 McDoom (2011), p.23

158 Interviews in London, Kigali, several encounters trough 2011 to 2013

Closer observers, external and internal ones, however, focus on another aspect. In 2002, the International Crisis Group noted the degree of refugee domination of the government at a time when the new Constitution was not yet in place.[159] According to more recent studies, the trend, rather than fading, has consolidated itself over time. Thus, both Gerard Prunier in 2009 and Timothy Longman in 2011 describe the ongoing state-building effort as the reflection of an undemocratic takeover by a core constituency of former Tutsi refugees returned from Uganda, Burundi, Tanzania and Congo.[160] The political leadership would thus have 'strongly favoured civic groups run by the returnees'.[161] Rwandan oppositional voices, for their part, claim that refugees were carried to power by the RPA, and that the new hierarchy in the country is based on the closeness of the respective groups to an English speaking military centre group coming from Uganda.[162] Accordingly there would be a 'pecking order' prevailing in all aspects of life according to the following ranking from top to bottom: former refugees in Uganda, English-speaking former refugees in Tanzania and Kenya, former refugees from Burundi, former refugees from Congo, and those who did not leave the country before or during the genocide. A subsequent and overlapping layer would put the Holocaust survivors over the large remainder of ordinary Rwandans. The persuasion that a 'caste' system is developing is indeed shared by a diverse range of persons to whom this author talked, and academic researchers have made the point of a possible 'Tutsification' of Rwandese political and economic life.[163] How strong and how exclusive alleged Tutsification might be, however, remains an open question. The annual

159 ICG (2002), *Rwanda at The End of the Transition*, Africa Report, 53,

160 See Longman, Timothy (2011), *The Undemocratic Nature of Transition in Rwanda*, in Straus, Scott and Waldorf, Lars, Remaking Rwanda University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, 25-47; Prunier (2009)

161 Longman (2011) p.27f

162 Gaspard, Musabyimana. (2011), *Peut-on établir un parallèle entre les Forces Armées Rwandaises et Rwanda Defense Forces?*, Echos d'Afrique, 3rd July, online edition, np

163 Sidiropoulos (2002)

handbook of the Great Lakes region published by Stefaan Maryse and Filip Reyntjens links the phenomenon to the period of power dominance of the political system by the RPF (until 2002-03), an aspect, which is less salient after the integration of former refugees in the Rwandan political sphere.[164] Others consider Tutsification as a logical outcome of the military victory and the practical necessities of the post-genocide construction process. An indicator for its non-occurrence in the years to come may be the limited extent to which English will impose itself as the language of administration and business, as many Rwandans rather express themselves in French (for the better educated ones) or Kinyarwanda (for the popular classes and beyond) than in the language of Shakespeare. So far French remains very prominent at least in urban environments and in the administration.

2.2 Enlisting the Military for National Re-Foundation

On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Chinese People's Liberation Army in July 2012, Minister of Defence James Kabarebe asserted that the RDF 'believes in and works towards being the foundation for the development of Rwanda'.[165] Even if the Minister had his Chinese audience in mind, this was something of an understatement regarding the role assigned to the army in national economic, moral, economic, institutional and political fundamental refoundation for some two decades, before it started concentrating on more purely military tasks in the recent years. There was a certain logic and inevitability to this: in 1994, the RPF/RPA was the only organised force and, for most of the next three years, the only working institution in the country.[166] The political leadership and much of the administrative staff had fled, leaving an

164 Maryse, Stefaan and Filip Reyntjens (2011), L'Afrique des grands lacs. Annuaire 2010/2011, L'Harmattan, Paris

165 Speech of Karabebe, James (2012), Minister of Defence Speech on the occasion of the 85th Anniversary of the Chinese PLA, Rwanda Ministry of Defence, Kigali, 31 July

166 Sidiropoulos (2002)

emptied treasury and destroying the archives behind them. The army therefore had to step in virtually everywhere, be it in terms of basic administration, policing of communities and jurisprudence, but also kick-starting financial and other economic services, whilst defending the country against the FDLR threat. The military arguably contributed to the consolidation of the new political leadership but also acted as the main state-strengthening tool in the immediate post-genocide years.

2.2.1 The Army's Role in Ideological and Social Refoundation

In a way, the RDF's role in ideological and social refoundation begun in the early 1990s, as it was still an armed political opposition in which army (RPA) and party (RPF) were undistinguishable. Video footage from the period 1991 to 1992 (no more specific dating was available) shown to this author reported a speech by Paul Kagame to his soldiers doctrinally presenting the RPA as 'a political army – responsible – to know exactly why we attack our own country'.[167] Throughout the war soldiers were kept under tough military discipline through a continuous programme of political indoctrination. Drawing explicitly inspiration from the Chinese PLA,[168] political commissioners were appointed in each fighting unit to fulfil three missions: firstly, to keep soldiers informed about the political situation and to remind soldiers for what they were fighting; secondly, as liaison with the civilian population; and, thirdly, to address complaints from soldiers against their officers.[169] The inclusion of political commissioners in the structures of the army leadership, as the former commander in chief explained, 'instilled political awareness and responsibility

167 Transcribed from English subtitles to a speech in Kinyarwanda

168 Much of the political education of RPA leader was gained at Tanzanian universiries

169 See Kinzer (2008), p.84; one RDF political officer told this author in an interview Rw 11 in 2012 that he was appointed to the post. There was no way to apply for the position or to reject the duty, interview in Ruhengeri, September 2012

within the army [and] thus ownership of other national issues beyond defence and security'.[170]

Political awareness and responsibility within the army, it was hoped, would contribute to creating ownership among the soldiers of other national issues beyond defence and security. Paul Kagame himself, indeed, has indicated that the RPF treated the RPA as a sort of educational facility – a "school of the nation".[171] This role, certainly, was facilitated by the exceptionally high level of national and international legitimacy enjoyed by the RPA in 1994, after it brought the genocide to an end without any meaningful material or other support from a paralysed international community.[172]

The role of the RPA/RDF in integrating former enemy combatants through an indigenously-conceived and run *Ingando* process has been explained above (section 1.7). What is important to note, in relation to *Ingando*, is that it was not only meant as a tool to reduce the immediate threat to the security of the country and the regime, but to serve as an 'impact multiplier' in the sense that reintegrated soldiers are expected to attract their kin to start over and commence a new life as part of the new Rwandan nation. The former enemy is therefore not only disarmed immediately and physically, but also indirectly and psychologically with the hope for a longer lasting and deeper effect. Similarly, it is interesting to note that the new, post-genocide historical narrative meant to re-found the unity of the nation (see section 2.1.1), was originally developed by veteran historians from a special history unit at the MoD in Kigali, the Rwanda Defence Forces Department of Information, Documentation and Military History.[173]

170 Karabebe (2012)

171 Ibid.; on the political commissioners' role in the Rwandan society at war, see also Mamdani (2002), p.7

172 McDoom (2011); see also Pottier (2002)

173 Interview Rwandan MOD, Kigali, April 2011

Accordingly, the RPA/RDF has not only been put in charge of military reintegration, but is also deeply involved in the reconversion of former FDLR and other fighters into civilian life, as the main implementing agent of a programme run under the authority of the Rwanda Demobilization and Reintegration Commission. 'De-doctrination' of former enemy combatants, to use the words of one of the trainers at camp Mutobo, starts with socio-economic profiling to adapt each individual's retraining with regard to his/her working skills and professional capacities, talents or priorities. Three months of training include many subjects: history, the national economy, corruption and nepotism, human rights, good governance and rural sector development, but also entrepreneurship, banking services, education, gender, medical insurance, the role of the police and the military, and eventually the meaning of citizenship. Every trainee receives an initial starter-kit worth about $US100, and another one worth $US200 after another two months. Trainee work projects are overseen and supported by consultants and regional demobilisation offices. Integration in a civilian environment is more complicated than in a military one, as it involves practical problems of compensation for lost property, inadequacy of skills in a new location or economic environment, etc. The programme, however, has been relatively successful. Begun with a group of 1,758 ex-FDLR fighters in December 2001, by May 2012 it had benefited a total of 8,621 former members of nine different armed groups, and even 288 ex-soldiers of the FARDC, who had completed the training cycles in Mutobo and had been released to their new homes.

The military, finally, must be a role model for the remodelling of the national identity beyond the boundaries of ethnic affiliation. As younger recruits have come on board who were born after the war, the RDF has all but eradicated the Hutu/Tutsi divide within its ranks. A single example may illustrate

this: as one officer explained to this author, on the occasion of a joint course at the Belgian Royal Military Academy, there were several groups of cadets with Rwandans and Burundis among them. On such occasions, Burundis always come in even numbers in order to ensure the ethnic balance of their delegation; however Rwanda sends groups in random numbers with no marked affiliation in order to demonstrate its neglect of ethnic issues. According to the officer, Burundian participants trying to identify the Rwandans' ethnic affiliation never learned whether they had guessed correctly or not.[174]

2.2.2 The Army's Role in Economic Rebuilding

The Rwandan army's involvement in economic activity, unfortunately, is better known for its illegal exploitation of the Eastern DRC's natural resources[175] than for its tremendous contribution to the economic reconstruction of the shattered country after 1994. The latter, fortunately, has been recently documented by Booth and Golooba-Mutebi in meticulous field research.[176]

A UN panel called to investigate the extent of the RPA's share in the DRC's economic exploitation in 2000-2001 concluded that the RPA financed its war in the DRC in five ways: through its own commercial activities, with then Colonel Kabarebe[177] mentioned as a facilitator in the coltan (source of niobium and tantalum) trade; via profits from shares it held in various companies; from taxes collected by the 'Congo Desk' of the Rwandan External Security Organisation (ESO), the foreign intelligence service; and from payments made

174 Rw 13 Interview at the Rwanda High Commission, London, November 2012

175 The most prominent academic critic of this organised exploitation is Reyntjens, Filip (2011), *Waging (Civil) War Abroad: Rwanda and the DRC*, in Strauss, Scott and Waldorf, Lars, Remaking Rwanda University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, also OECD (2011), *US Companies and Illegal Resource Exploitation in DRC*, OECDWatch, Online edition, np

176 See Booth, David and Frederick Golooba-Mutebi (2011), *Developmental Patrimonialism? The case of Rwanda*, Africa Power and Politics Programme, where

177 Later to become the Rwandan minister of defence

by individuals for protection of their businesses by the RPA.[178] Using a largely theoretical measurement, it appears that resources from Eastern DRC, at one per cent of Rwandese GDP financed a little less than one quarter of the Rwandese military between 1998 and 2003, the cost of which was estimated at the time to represent about 3.8 per cent of national GDP.[179] There was in those years, the UN panel noted, a great deal of interaction between the military apparatus, the state (civil) bureaucracy, and the business community. As the economy has been recovering, however, the Rwandan leadership has been anxious to lift accusations levered against it and Rwanda has made a point of appearing as a role model in Africa and beyond. As a result, direct military involvement in DRC natural resources exploitation has been tamed, mining activities have been commercialised and the country has striven to adopt the most demanding international transparency rules.[180]

Away from the limelight of international attention, the military has played a tremendous role on the domestic front in Rwanda's post-genocide economic rebuilding. In a way, this role developed organically, from fulfilling the basic needs of the RPA as it was still a guerrilla war in the early 1990s to the assumption of a major task in lifting the country from devastation after the catastrophe. As a lively business sector has emerged and the regime has been

178 United Nations (2001), UN Report of the Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth of the Democratic Republic of the Congo S/2001/357, United Nations, New York, para.126

179 Présidence de la République (2011); United Nations (2011), p.122, According to Filip Reyntjens, gold and coltan from the DRC provided 6.1 per cent of Rwanda's GDP in 1999, see Reyntjens, Filip (2007), *Staatlichkeit in der Region der grossen Seen Afrikas*, in Schmierer, Joscha and Weiss, Stefani, Prekäre Staatlichkeit und internationale Ordnung Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, Wiesbaden, 279-294, p.286

180 The control over the mineral trade has been moved to civilian authorities (Rwandan Geology and Mines Authority). Rwanda is the first country in the region (April 2009) to have implemented certification standards developed by Germany's Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources concerning transparency, traceability, labour and working conditions, security, community development and environmental aspects. In March 2011 Rwanda implemented the Tin Supply Chain Initiative tagging system in order to curb the illegal trading of minerals. By September 2011, four semi-industrial mining companies had undergone an independent compliance audit; Présidence de la République (2011); United Nations (2011), pp.186ff

keen on demonstrating the professionalism of its armed forces, the involvement of the military in economic activity has decreased in relative terms. It nevertheless remains an important feature of Rwanda's 'developmental patrimonialism' (see below).

The Rwandan army is involved in almost all economic sectors, from banks to insurance, to construction, to agriculture and other domains. It operates via large companies and holdings, the most well-known of which are the Zigema Credit and Savings Society (Zigema CSS), the Horizon Group and Agro-Processing Industries. An emanation of the RDF/RPA's war experience, the Tri-Star holding has also benefitted from the RPA's capital investment and from its networks to grow into one of the most powerful national economic actors. All of these companies begun as limited services to fulfil the RPA/RDF's own needs and later developed into comprehensive national services.

The role of Zigema CSS has been crucial as an all-purpose bank able to manage the basic cash flow on which the fledgling economy depended after the genocide. Zigema CSS's anchoring in the security services is unmistakable: every soldier, police, ex-soldier and former police has a bank account at CSS, and the service number of the soldier is identical with his account number. There were 120,000 such accounts in 2011. Besides, seven per cent of the soldiers' salary represents compulsory savings, with each enlistee thus automatically becoming a shareholder of the bank. Further, the bank's general assembly is held at Ministry of Defence Headquarters. Zigema CSS is reportedly very profitable; for example, a profit of two billion Rwandese francs (GBP 2.01 million) for the previous financial year was announced at its general assembly in March 2010.[181] The bank's credit portfolio reportedly increased by an impressive 20 per cent over the same period while deposits grew by nearly

181 www.mod.gov.rw/?Military-Cooperative-Bank-realized

27 per cent, indicating a significant improvement in the welfare of its cooperative members over the year. Credits were granted for agriculture and livestock projects as well as a number of small scale projects like personal houses.[182]

Similarly to banking services, social security, one of the big achievements of the Third Republic, was initiated by the military, with four regimes in place: the army-owned and army-focussed Military Medical Insurance (MMI); the *Caisse Sociale Rwandaise* (CSR); the Social Security Fund of Rwanda (SSFR) open to all civil servants, including the military; as well as a general insurance company, the *Mutuelle de Santé*, open to all citizens. Until the early 2010s, the CSR charged 3,000 Rwandan Franc (Rfr) per person annually and the *Mutuelle* cost 1,000 Rfr (1.12 Euro p/p or 5.60 Euro for a family of five) annually. As these rates turned out to be unsustainable in the long term, plans to merge and privatise the three non-military insurance schemes were being developed in 2012.[183]

Horizon Group is the army-owned holding company in the field of productive enterprises. It was established with equipment donated by the government and a team of military engineers seconded from the army. Even if Horizon's acting director came from Zigema CSS, the army's bank, it is run as a private firm and welcomes private shareholders. Horizon has a policy to recruit staff from the diaspora, with business efficiency and the meeting of strategic social objectives taking precedence over commitments to local hiring and capacity development. Horizon has been involved in the construction of rural infrastructure as well as the development of agribusiness with an aim of restoring export agriculture to something approaching its pre-war level. Its first

182 Houses with pan tiles instead of tin roofs are called 'Darfurs' because the allowance given for the deployment to Darfur has allowed a number of soldiers to obtain higher mortgages, interview with a Rwandan soldier, Kigali, May 2011

183 Interview TW 10 with the MoD Kigali, May 2011

tasks included the erection of irrigation dykes, coffee-washing stations for other army-owned agricultural enterprises, and manioc-growing farms. Horizon also took over the production of biological insecticides at the *Sopyrwa* plant in Musanze when it went bankrupt in 2008. A second important domain of Horizon investment has been urban housing, as this became a vital matter when competition between returnees and displaced people for access to the limited housing stock became acute in the late 1990s. The company also works in road and bridge construction, with 'Horizon Construction' often implementing projects as a sub-contractor of the German company STRABAG as part of a know-how transfer arrangement. Horizon serves as a supplier of construction sites to other companies thanks to its brick-making plants. Another branch of the company, Horizon Logistics, has won contracts to support the Rwandan peacekeeping forces in Darfur.

With Agro-Processing Industries Ltd., the army has grown into an important economic actor in contributing to food security, for itself as a priority (the army is food self-sufficient), but also, more broadly, to communities in need, as a supplier of export cash, and, to some extent, as an agent of agriculture sector modernisation.[184] Agro-Processing produces maize (20,000 tons), beans and soya beans at Gabiro (4,000 hectares), manioc (15,000 tons) pineapples (100 hectares, with further growth plans), and avocados and mangos in a variety of locations; it runs ten coffee factories (500 tonnes) and a dairy in Nyanza, which exports to the DRC, Burundi, Kenya, Malawi and Uganda.[185] Plans are also underway to produce 16 by-products of manioc (or cassava), including biofuel and flour. Agro-processing cooperates closely with

184 www.mod.gov.rw/?Lessons-from-Randa-How-to-use-army
185 Brig Gen Alex Ibambasi, www.mod.gov.rw/?RDF-expects-over-15-000-tonnes-of

local farmers, who have learnt how to save money and open bank accounts as a side effect of this cooperation.[186]

The nucleus of post-war Rwandan economic reconstruction, however, has been the RPF's production department of Tri-star Investments S.A.R.L.. Originally funded by RPF's political supporters in the diaspora, Tri-star has grown into a large holding company from a limited economic activity primarily meant to ensure the guerrilla's food security during the civil war. Immediately after the fighting stopped in 1994 Tri-Star expanded into road construction, housing estates, building materials, fruit processing, other food and drinks production (such as bottled water and dairy products, including cheese), metals trading, mobile telephony, printing, furniture imports, and security services, responding to the acute material post war shortages of the country. The war chest of the RPA/RPF was used to import goods and even to pay for newly recruited civil servants' salaries. In the absence of any economic infrastructure and know-how Tri-Star organised the kick-start of the recovery. Over time its role moved from the initial shoring up the national economy to doing long term business on behalf of the party.[187]

One of the particularly successful undertakings of Tri-Star, from both the economic and the social change perspectives has been its investment in mobile telephony. Following the failure of an initial joint venture attempt with Libyan investors,[188] the business partnership signed in mid- 1998 by Tri-Star and the South African MTN has had a long lasting effect. Via Tri-Star, the army introduced Rwanda to mobile telephony earlier than it would have happened otherwise, attracted foreign direct investment, and generated significant taxable

186 Kebaso, George (2011), *Rwandan Military Fighting Against Hunger*, New Agriculturalist, June, np

187 Booth and Golooba-Mutebi (2011), p.10

188 As the Libyan partner, at the time still Colonel Gadhafi, did not honour the contract, the government decided to withdraw the concession. Kigali was not prepared to lose step out of worries about the Colonel's goodwill.

revenues.[189] Profits could soon be reinvested to establish a mobile network in Uganda. In 2007 Tri-Star sold its shares, followed by the government in 2011, for a profit of ten and 20 per cent, respectively.

In sum, the industriousness of the army kick-started the economy when it was destroyed. It pioneered corporate production at a time when no foreign or domestic investor was available, and built sustainable companies that could be taken over by private investors when they appeared.[190] In 2012 nine Tri-Star companies were still operating successfully against competition from Kenyan and Chinese firms (among others).[191] Tri-Star's gradually decreasing importance to the Rwandan economy is still measurable by its contribution of nine per cent of direct taxes in fiscal year 2009-10.

2.2.3 The Army: A Tool of Developmental Patrimonialism?

David Booth and Frederick Golooba-Mutebi, who have studied the Rwandese economic system put in place by the RPF regime closely, categorise it squarely as a form of 'developmental patrimonialism'.[192] Developmental patrimonialism is distinguished from non- (or less) developmental forms of neopatrimonial politics by the fact that the economic activities carried out by the

189 MTN is one of the top two taxpayers in Rwanda. It employs 690 persons directly, only two of whom are expatriates. Indirect employment, including dealerships and security guards, is estimated at over 5,000.

190 In the World Bank's Doing Business Survey 2010 Rwanda was categorised as the second place among top global improvers in business investment conditions and the best in East Africa. In 2011 Rwanda ranked only behind Mauritius and South Africa among African states, see for example The World Bank (2012), Doing Business in a More Transparent World, The World Bank, Washington

191 Inyange Industries, Intersec Security, Bourbon Coffee, Bond Trading, NPD-COTRACO, Mutara Enterprises, Graphic Print Solutions, Real Contractors, and Media Systems Group

192 Booth and Golooba-Mutebi (2011). See also Dawson, Martin and Tim Kelsall (2011), Anti-developmental Patrimonialism in Zimbabwe, APPP Working Paper, London; Cammack, Diana and Tim Kelsall (2011), *Neo-patrimonialism, Institutions and Economic Growth: The Case of Malawi, 1964-2009*, IDS Bulletin, 42, 2, 88-96. Developmental patrimonialism should not be confused with a 'developmental dictatorship', a concept discussed in the late 1970s and early 1980s, which focussed on the skills and will of a small authoritarian clique to advance the development of a given country, see Gregor, James A (1979), Italian Fascism and Developmental Dictatorship Princeton University Press, Princeton; O'Donnell, Guillermo and Philippe C Schmitter (1986), Transitions from Authoritarian Rule, Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies, Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore

state, party and army-owned economic players (such as Tri-Star) are intended to maximise economic rents to their collective benefit and/or that of broader groups of citizens in the long run, rather than the personal revenues of their members in the short run. In other words, developmental patrimonialism is a qualified form of an oligarchic political system, which is in the long term oriented toward the common good of society.

Developmental patrimonialism has a major economic and cultural-political consequence: it removes much of the incentive for corruption in the higher ranks of the party, the administration or the army.[193] As individuals in leading positions have legitimate channels to pursue economic interests, they perceive high-level political corruption as unnecessary or much less worth pursuing. Indeed, from the moment Paul Kagame took the helm at the government in 2000, he ensured that the system in Rwanda would distance itself from traditional African patronage standards and nepotism. The president's 'strait-laced anti-corruption line' indeed credibly explains why some of his former allies eventually fell out with him and went into opposition.[194] Others may not go as far, but in Kigali an air of discontent can be perceived in conversations with Rwandans who are generally favourable to the regime but disappointed that no patrimonial-style dividends of victory have materialised into personal riches in the past decade.[195]

The leadership's zero-tolerance policy against corruption is said to have been enforced in the military even at the height of the interventions in Congo, where 'individual military officers were under strong pressure not to acquire material benefits personally, and none are known to have done so with

193 Booth and Golooba-Mutebi (2011), p.3
194 Ibid. p.7, see also Kinzer (2008)
195 Perry, Alex J (2012), Q&A: Rwandan President Paul Kagame, 14 September

impunity'.[196] As opposed to the personalised privateering of their Ugandan allies, for example, the Rwandan military's commercial activities in Eastern DRC, controversial as they were, have indeed served the state-cum-party rather than individuals. Profits from the exploitation of Congolese minerals during the Congo wars were channelled through Rwanda Metals, one of the daughters of Tri-Star, trading minerals between Congolese brokers and international markets. They helped the RPA finance its war and also funded some domestic development projects with a larger social/political scope. Because of the international critique about exploitation of Congolese natural resources, however, Rwanda Metals was sold to a Botswana company after the end of combat in Congo in late 2002.

2.2.4 From a Political to a Professional Army

Until 2002 the armed forces (RDF) and the party (RPF) had been factually identical, with the political military being little more than the armed wing of the party.[197] An important step in the emancipation of the military from politics was the civilianisation of the government, following the adoption of a new Constitution in 2003 and the holding of the first multi-party election. The 2003 Constitution banning the combination of the presidential office with any public service position, civilian or military,[198] paved the way for Paul Kagame to 'reinvent himself' as a civilian leader, nine years after having led the reconquest of the country and once he had securely laid the basis for its moral, physical and political reconstruction. Given his personal role in the transformation of Rwanda, his transfer to a purely civilian position could not but have an impact

196 Golooba-Mutebi, Frederick (2010), The Uganda People's Defence Forces (UDPDF) in the Context of its Predecessor Armies: Continuity and Change, Makerere Institute of Social Research, Kampala

197 Sidiropoulos (2002)

198 Article 109 of the constitution spells out that 'the office of the President of the Republic is incompatible with the holding of any other elective public office, public function or any other civilian or military employment or professional activities'

on the respective roles of the army and the party/regime. Since May 2002, when the Rwandan armed forces became the new RDF, they increasingly emancipated themselves from the party, and thus from politics, although there is still influence through personal unions between party veterans and high ranking military officers.

As of the early 2000s, the priority of the President has been to transform the military into an essentially professional force, both in terms of the functions it performs domestically and of its international image. Domestically, the military remains focussed on its dual roles in economic development and border security, in relation to the high level of threat still perceived from the FDLR in Eastern Congo. Internationally, the RDF has earned itself in little more than a decade the reputation of being one of the most professional, well-equipped and combat-hardened armies in Africa. Its performance, as well as the country's confidence, is demonstrated by its high level of participation in peacekeeping operations, both in troop numbers and ranking officers, which is on a par with African countries with a much longer experience in the domain, such as Nigeria and Ghana.[199] Participation in peacekeeping is of course an important means for Rwanda to sustain its army of 33,000 personnel.[200] At the same time the permanent readiness of about 10,000 peacekeepers deployed or on training insures the maintenance of a high operational capacity.

The military, whilst remaining politically close to the regime, is therefore increasingly shifting its attention and priority to purely military tasks. Asked about their loyalty by this author in the course of his research in 2011-12, RDF

199 In November 2012 Rwanda had 4108 soldiers in peacekeeping operations. In January 2007 Brigadier General (Dr) Ephrem Rurangwa assumed the post of AMIS Deputy Force Commander in Darfur, followed by General Patrick Nyamvumba as Force Commander of the more than 21.000 strong UNAMID in September 2009. In June 2013 General Jean-Bosco Kazura took command of the 12.600 strong military component of MINUSMA in Mali

200 Rwanda receives payments of $US 1.028 per man/month for each soldier deployed in UNAMID, see www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/operations/financing.shtml

soldiers unanimously stressed their attachment to the state rather than to the party.[201]

3 Conclusion

In Rwanda's pre-colonial age, the strong state was basically an instrument to secure and gradually expand the country's territory, but it also served the interests of its people, for example by protecting the population against slave hunters in the 19th century. A century later, the gradual monopolisation of the power of the state by an increasingly small oligarchy following the Hutu revolution of 1959 led to repeated pogroms against Tutsi minority groups, culminating in the 1994 genocide: whilst its social and political foundations had been weakened, the state had retained its capacity to control, repress and in the end exterminate. The drive undertaken by the RPF-dominated government since 1994 aims to renew the political and social foundations of the state as the basis for the restoration of a stable and assertive country based not only on the superstructure of strong institutions, but also on a renovated moral fabric.

The military has been associated with each phase of this tortuous and often violent history, although with very different roles and relations to the political power. In pre-colonial Rwanda as well as in the immediate post-genocide years, the military had no rationale, and no existence separately from the political leadership. Paradoxically, these periods also correspond with a high degree of professionalism and performance of the armed forces. By contrast, the post-colonial military, even after it had mutated from the original National Guard to the FAR, never reached the capacity of a professional army. Rather, it remained an essentially tribal force under the First Republic, increasingly becoming a factionalist and politicised formation under the Second Republic. As

201 Interviews and conversations with individual soldiers in Rwanda in 2011 and 2013

a result, the armed forces had no prospect to become the state's and nation's army.

Some two decades after the genocide, the reconstructed national army, the RDF, remains a pillar of national economic and moral reconstruction in the context of a centrally-steered drive for social change. Unlike in the Congo and in Cameroon where the armed forces are linked to the political leadership via the bounds of patronage, this linkage in Rwanda is of an ideological nature, born out of the common history of resistance, conquest, and revolution. What remains unclear is how far the armed force will go in developing a separate identity from that of the political leadership as they pursue their state-building duty and their quest for military professionalism in parallel. Equally unclear is whether Rwanda is moving toward a Huntingtonian type of civil-military relationship. As long as President Kagame remains at the helm of power, this question will likely remain moot, though: whether in military or in civilian clothes, his prestige for having led the campaign to victory that enabled the physical and moral resurrection of the country remains so great that he can only be revered by the overwhelming majority of the military.

Chapter 6: Quasi- and Other Armies

The chief foundations of all states are good laws and good arms
and there cannot be good laws where there are no good arms.
Nicholo Machiavelli

1 Introduction

On the basis of the variables defined at the beginning of the study and analysis of post-colonial history we can now deduce from our three case studies by which political means state-strengthening measures or state weakening policies were implemented, and what effect they had on the place of the military between the ruling elites and the wider community. This analysis reveals both commonalities and differences among the three countries, taking into account pre-colonial conditions and historical evolution. Colonial states preceding independence were in all cases weak states.[1] Few could build on the history of formerly existing indigenous organised states with local standing armies. In Rwanda and Cameroon, foreign African soldiers were introduced, leading to the experience of a double alienation of the people from the military. By contrast, in the Congo, indigenous forces led by non-African officers provided protection to the alien regime of the colonial state. However, the fact that the coercive forces were Congolese people did not mitigate their alienation from the people.

2 The Three Case Studies

Post-colonial state-building was in none of the cases initiated entirely under conditions of uncontested local ownership. This resulted in a much

1 As demonstrated by Young (1994), and Berman, Bruce J (1997), *The Perils of Bula Matari: Constraint and Power in the Colonial State*, Canadian Journal of African Studies, 31, 3, 556-570

closer relationship between the new rulers and foreign promoters than between these rulers and their people. Still, foreign influence was never strong enough to impose new political values that were alien to the local political culture, and which had only developed in the Northern 'mother countries' shortly before and during decolonisation. This circumstance of weak influence endures in the context of contemporary security sector reform efforts, pursued by well-intended donor states since the late 1990s. In no case in our examination (which could well be extended to other countries in the sub-region) did the creation of a modern army occur by calculated reform or through the dynamic of warfare before 1994. In the Congo, as is argued in the first case study chapter, post-colonial state-building failed, and without a fall-back position of previous statehood the country returned to the condition of non-directed state formation with its corresponding Early-Modern warfare. Cameroon reveals a history of stalled state-building and a policy of non-reform. In the only case where a serious attempt at state-building can be detected after 1994, Rwanda, a victorious military was virtually catapulted into the driver's seat of government by its total victory in an extremely ferocious civil war.

2.1 Congo

Congolese politicians' and soldiers' achievements in state-building can only be measured against their own declared aim to represent a proper state with its national army. Taking this as a benchmark it is an interesting observation that throughout its history, and most notably on day five of independence, state-building in the Congo was described as a process of re-construction. Re-constructing a state would mean to establish a *status quo ante*, identifying the original state and its institutions, making an inventory of what would be worth reconstruction, and analysing the reasons for the moment of its collapse in order to prevent replicating the failure. So far, whatever

embodiment of statehood ordinary Congolese have encountered has been at best pockets of inefficient administration and more generally an illegitimate predator in the flesh or in the form of an organisation – be this civilian or military.[2] The Congo is at the stage of the Natural or Tillian state.

What was left in terms of institutions from the colonial inheritance, non-systematic and arbitrary in character as it was,[3] was abused and turned into a means of power and money by the new elites.[4] The construct that would have come closest to being a state, the Belgian colonial inverted quasi-state of the post-World War II era, had neither antecedent nor successor. Under Mobutu, a dearth of institutionalised direct rule spread to all sectors of communal life, reducing the weak state to complete impotence. After his demise, the creation of the FAC under the leadership of Laurent Désiré Kabila was a device to establish the new political elite militarily, but it was a technical failure because a legitimate monopoly on violence was never achieved. Again, this lack of legitimacy of the political leadership resulted in the failure of the would-be state. As a consequence of the Congolese aborted state-building process, the land and people, to use Jean François Bayart's words, fell back into the 'utterly haphazard and even confused' stage of state formation.[5]

The non-materialised Congolese state is tantamount to a non-materialised Congolese army. 'Monsieur le Président, vous n'avez pas d'armée…' is hence the title of an open letter to President Kabila.[6] To cite a Congolese voice on this *problématique*, Godefroid Kä Mana, the president of the prestigious Pole Institute in Goma, put it a few days after this city fell under

2 See Doorn, Jacobus Adrianus Antonius van (1975), The Soldier and Social Change: Comparative Studies in the History and Sociology of the Military, Sage Publications, Beverly Hills, p.79

3 Trefon (2011), p.74

4 Devlin, Lawrence (2007), Chief of Station, Congo: Fighting the Cold War in a Hot Zone, Public Affairs, New York, p.238

5 Bayart, Jean François (2000), *Africa in the World: a History of Extraversion*, African Affairs, 99, 395, 217-267, p.246

6 Hoebeke, et al. (2009)

rebel control in November 2012: the FARDC is '*une armée fantomatique dans un pays sans Etat ni gouvernance*'; the FARDC is a phantom army in a country without state or government.[7]

The army has to be a coherent military body, loyal to the constitution, and trained and equipped to defend the state and country. Instead, the regular Congolese military – claiming to represent a national army without delivering on this promise – is something different, even if it carries the proud name 'Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic'.

In the absence of statehood the drive for alternative forms of order become an unavoidable necessity.[8] If Mobutu's personal-rule regime survived 20 years in the Cold War context, the void in direct rule left by Laurent Kabila's regime was quickly filled by other non-state actors.[9] Under such conditions the 'discourse of violence remain[ed] the sole legitimate expression of political change'.[10] Violent actors in need of a lawless biotope to flourish are attracted by such non-state conditions. This does not mean that warlords are necessarily coming from the fringes of society: 'Nearly all "warlords" [once] occupied central positions in the authority structures of regimes that they later attacked.'[11]

As an outcome, impunity for criminal acts has become a common feature among the military, both high and low echelons, estranging it further from the civilian population. The political values of human rights and human dignity, democracy, civic education and respect for the citizenry are all public goods

7 For Kabarebe see the interview given to Colette Braeckman, Braeckman, Colette (2013), *Cartes sur table: les quatre vérités du général James Kabarebe*, Les cahiers de Nicole Braeckman, internet blog, 29 August, np; for the quote see Kä Mana (2012), *Comment j'ai vécu la chute de Goma et les questions qu'elle nous pose en RDC maintenant*

8 See Trefon, Theodore (2013), *Uncertainty and powerlessness in Congo 2012*, Review of African Political Economy, 40, 135, 141-151

9 Reyntjens (2011), p.138

10 Vlassenroot (2006), p.59

11 Reno, William (2006b), *Insurgencies in the Shadow of State Collapse*, in Kaarsholm, Preben, Violence, Political Culture and Development in Africa James Curry, Oxford, 25-48, p.31

that have been denied to the people by the military and political elites since independence. The FARDC with its 'abysmal record' sets the lowest standard in this regard within the sample of this enquiry.[12]

The Huntingtonian separation, the precondition for Western style military professionalism, has not developed in Congo. The often aired aspiration to build an 'African style military', which would contribute to the general public good as an 'army of development', has not materialised. Instead, dyadic clientelist power structures shape society and the military, whose officers are available to take over any role, from arbitrator, to security provider, to criminal, to any service distributor to those willing to pay tribute to them. The dominant figure in an oligarchic society like the Congo may well be a 'General' but he is usually also a landowner, an entrepreneur, and a 'highly personalistic leader who […] does not distinguish among his various roles. He, in fact, uses all the political tactics, bribery, force, cajolery, threat, [and] popular appeal'.[13] Such a military does not strengthen the state – it weakens it as the worst form of a quasi-army.

2.2 Cameroon

Cameroonian state and army building stalled after the initial installation of the neo-colonial construct under French supervision. Over time the only two presidents of Cameroon emancipated themselves increasingly from foreign influence, and they succeeded in building up their domestic power bases and diversifying the range of their external partners. Military and civilian bureaucracies morphed into shadows of themselves, subordinate to informal networks. The state apparatus, increasingly a pervasive sinecure, became the most important medium for the distribution of wealth and power among

12 Kippenberg, J (2009), Soldiers who rape, commanders who condone: sexual violence and military reform in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Human Rights Watch,

13 Huntington (1968), p.201

constantly evolving networks. The military, as much as the civilian bureaucracy, is a section of society with which other patronage systems intersect, existing at times in harmony, and at times in competition. The Cameroonian proto-Weberian state is a more sophisticated version than the Congolese one. It includes pockets of functioning administration and of a technically professional military organisation. Although growing military expertise can be detected at the tactical level of selected units, the overall picture remains that of a privatised instrument at the discretion of the President-monarch.

If it comes to historical evolution one can conceptually differentiate between three different quasi-armies that have to some extent co-existed or chronologically overlapped. These 'armies' were, first, the pre-independence forces of the transitional government of Cameroon, the *Garde Camerounaise*; second, the neo-colonial *Forces armées camerounaises* of the first decade of independence after 1960; and, third, their successor under the same name, which became a monarchist military in character after 1982. These 'armies' therefore moved from being a placeholder of French rule, via an existence as French satellite combat forces, to eventually form a pillar of the personal rule system under President Paul Biya. In terms of doctrine they have successively mutated through three phases. Firstly, one finds a 'people's army' to fight a domestic insurgency until about 1975; then, a 'two-speed army' gradually formed, with one minor republican armed force to defend the territory of the state and a bigger proportion to be paraded on Independence Day. Thirdly, with this gap remaining, part of the military has developed the capacity to guarantee external security and internal whilst another part merely serves as a tool to project the regional foreign policy political interests of the incumbent

regime.[14] Cameroon's successive armies, in addition, have drawn all of their legitimacy from their alleged function as an 'army of development'. This claim to represent a 'force for the economic good' of the nation, however, has never been honoured. The Cameroonian quasi-army, a patchwork rather than a coherent body, is no vehicle to build a strong state but an instrument strong enough to mainntain a regime.

2.3 Rwanda

The Rwandan pre-colonial army was discharged and followed upon by the colonial *Force Publique* and the National Guard of Ruanda-Urundi. Only in 1973 did the post-colonial GNR of 1962 become the 'Rwandan army' FAR. The National Guard had been the first entity that was to be composed of Rwandan soldiers and NCOs, still to be commanded by Belgian officers. Regularly executed purges within the force aligned it with the successive ruling elites. The character of the First Republic's army was a tribal one; that of the Second Republic was a regional factionist and politicised one, further differentiating the internal power system within the tribalist regime.

Post-colonial Rwandan state-building remained short of that which would have been necessary to implement a truly institutionalised apparatus, open to all citizens and subject to the law. The necessary technical preconditions were in place: a history of state formation even if interrupted by colonial quasi-state-building, administrative experience, and even a culturally homogenous population. What was missing to construct the strong state was the political will of the elites and their obedient followers. The armed forces thus remained a military instrument at the hands of a sectarian regime, technically useful to the extent demanded. Without ever having developed the capacity and motivation

14 Cameroonian internal security issues, especially in the Nothern border areas, increasingly result from spilover of armed conflict in Nigeria (Boko Haram) and the Chad and the Central Aftican Republic (Baba Ladé, Bozizé, Seleca)

to be the national armed branch of the bureaucracy, the GNR and the FAR remained quasi-armies, which under stress could be turned against the population.

The step from quasi-army to political army was actually a catharsis, coinciding with defeat for the former and victory for the latter. After that, the Rwandan military undertook a metamorphosis by gradually incorporating former FAR and militias into its ranks to create the new regular army RDF.

The fact that the army can no longer be described as an ethnically dominated institution reveals a positive tendency towards the strengthening of a *domus* loyalty of the citizenry over a *genus*-oriented one along ethnic lines. The trend is paralleled on the civilian front where efforts are underway to establish a 'regular process for recruiting and training bureaucrats',[15] as part of the state's consolidation and self-perpetuation. As in the Chinese Tang dynasty, the process is meant to prevent the creation of 'hereditary' power structures in competition with those of the ruler.[16] State-building has thus overcome an important barrier in advancing the concept of administration as a legal abstract entity.

Overall, national cohesion is more advanced in the army than in the rest of society as the former does not experience the same confrontation about resources like land and housing as does the latter, and behaviour can more easily be ordered in a military organisation.

Rwandan political culture is as prone to top-down policies as other countries in Central Africa. Hierarchical attitudes are historically strong, as is submissive behaviour of the population, certainly a fact that facilitated the genocide. A similar top-down approach is now helping to press through a politico-cultural revolution via a state-strengthening policy. As described in

15 Gurses and Mason (2010), p.141
16 Van Creveld (1999), p.42

Chapter 2 on the basis of the Turkish and Japanese examples, the determination of a ruling political elite to depart from the patrimonial order is essential to steer a radical change of culture. 'Managed transition from above', as Bratton/Van de Walle put it, 'is most likely in a military oligarchy'.[17] Accordingly the Rwandan army has been the initiator and tutor of this course. As in Turkey in 1924 the change of official language from French to English is a key tool to marshal the propagation of new social and political values. Unlike post World War I Turkey, the Rwandan civil war and genocide had pitted Rwandans against one another and wounds remain difficult to heal. However, the Congo campaigns provided 'unification wars' in the Bismarckian sense. There are limits, however, to what the army can achieve in terms of state transformation. Although the RPA/PRF understood itself as a revolutionary, political, force, the new duality of RPF and RDF is still handicapped by the closed military culture of its leaders and, naturally so, of its structures.

One of the government's tactics is to introduce a new national historical narrative laying the blame for ethnic tensions at the former colonialists' doorstep for consolidating the tribal concepts, which they rightly identify as the root cause of recurring violent outbreaks. However, even as most citizens express their relief that tribalism has vanished from the scene, many of them refuse the attempted cultural revolution implying eradication of all tribal affiliation.

Despite much evidence of a state-strengthening society, checks and balances on the insufficiently inclusive evolving caste system remain too limited to force an opening up of the third Republic. The political elite's military mind and culture is prone to paranoia, as they consider the questionable outcomes of historic liberalisation processes in the country. This may slow

17 Bratton and Van de Walle (1994), p.480

down the political process of state-building, leaving Rwanda stalled at the doorstep of an open-access order. Navigating between Scylla and Charybdis, the regime may lose its compass and stray from the course towards an open access society.

In Rwanda the army is not a ‘moderniser’ in the Western sense of modernity. Rather it tries to rebalance contemporary African political culture against the necessity of a new national narrative and high expectations from both Rwandans and international observers. State-building is facilitated by the Rwandan army. Its quasi-ness, relative to conventional Huntingtonian armies, lies in its high degree of cultural integration in its African parent society.

3 The Military, the Quasi-army, the Army

The military comes in manifold manifestations, having done so throughout history. It existed before states themselves and was centrally involved in the formation of the state. Military bodies exist without affiliation to existing states or in affiliation to only theoretically existing states; in competition with the regular army of a state; or parallel to, and in cooperation with, the state’s regular army. Historically, state formation and military formation went hand in hand until the current combination of the Weberian legal rational state and its professional army was achieved. During this process the military was the uni-ovular twin of the state at every stage of this parallel and intertwined progression. Whilst the military may have various roles to fulfil in functional and socio-political terms, if the main purpose of an armed body is not to defend the territorial integrity of the state against an outside actor, then it is not an army. Other military formations, like for instance local, tribal, or regional militias, belong to a category of sub-state organisations of the community, which are

not meant to form a standing army, nor even an element of the state.[18] They are temporary in character and meant to be so. The decisive variable for a military body to qualify as an army is the steady and regular connection to the state. The mere claim to represent a state or to loyally serve it is not sufficient. In relatively recent states, only the type of empirical research carried out in this study can reliably inform us on the army's real existence.

4 The Soldier without the State

The aim of every contemporary SSR programme is to transform an existing military into an army in the Huntingtonian sense. Such an army implies the existence of civilian state institutions to which the army can relate. Any SSR programme is therefore at the same time an endeavour in state-building. The state, in turn, is the institutional reflection of a historically evolved particular form of political organisation of the community. The people acknowledging themselves collectively as citizens of a state represent one particularly sophisticated form of an 'invented community' grown out of a gradually developed sense of togetherness. Its sense of cohesion, usually socially constructed from a range of pre-existing narrower communities, is defined by its distinction from the 'othernesses' of non-members. Historically this sense of unity grew into nationalism and then patriotism. In Central Africa a form of nationalism exists, related to the idea of the community but not to the idea of the state. In a context of amorphous efforts to build state institutions, it has not led to the creation of nation states.

The difference between the African and European or Asian experiences lies in the inexistence or the curtailing of the historical process of state formation in Africa, followed by a post-independence launch and/or resumption

18 Rouquié (1988), p.133; Even in a functioning and empirically existing state some forms of military, especially private organisations, are not part of the army

of a state-building process on the basis of untransformed political cultures. The discrepancy between the visible institutional constructs (those of the Weberian, sometimes democratic state) and the political culture underpinning the way they work is crucial to an understanding of the political dynamics and the functional/dysfunctional status of state institutions in Africa, including the military. It has become clear over time that the micro-level of individual attitudes and political modernity are in a dialectic relationship with the macro-level of political culture. Attitudes and political behaviour are interrelated, and political change depends on the cultural permissibility of such change. A discrepancy between the visible institutional construct on the ground, which may appear as a Weberian or even democratic order, and the political-cultural underpinning of clientelism and neo-patrimonialism is also reflected in the military domain.

The political bargain necessary to foster a strong 'accountability link' between leaders and the population has been further hampered by a political culture and structure resting on dyadic relationships, which are a form of private arrangements between individuals rather than a force to advance coalitions of interests. Dyadic relationships also prevail both within the armed forces and between military leaders and their civilian elite peers. A common good cannot crystallise in such an environment. Electoral processes, promoted to focus attention on collective aims and interests, have so far not generated strong links between the state and the citizen. Rather, elected persons continue to provide 'gifts' to the people from public funds at their own discretion, and the public is grateful for such hand-outs. The political culture ensures that political support is built around personalities and individual favours, rather than policies. This results in a distortion of the important

'accountability link' between the leaders as representing legal persons and the public as the balancing power.[19]

5 Conclusion

The aim of this enquiry was to provide an overview of the role of the military as one of the key actors in Central African state-building, in order to help identify whether and in which conditions the military can be a vehicle for state-building, and where it is an obstacle thereto. This question is important in the context of many unsuccessful internationally-sponsored programmes to install good governance on the African continent, in particular via major security sector reform endeavours.

We can now critically re-assess the presumptions on which current state-building policies are based: first, the suggested necessity of the construction of a state following patterns of liberal democratic polities; second, the idea that change can be organised somewhat mechanically once all of the known constitutional and technical conditions have been established; and, third, the hope that national ownership of state-building can be deepened. However, many actors actually have no interest in changing their country's mode of political regulation. Contemporary emergency state-building, as a project of 'social engineering', generates suboptimal results because of the obvious lack of enthusiasm of African political and military superiors to seriously accomplish publically self-set targets in the implementation of the rule of law. As was demonstrated, differences in political culture are among the profoundly underestimated factors leading to mutual misunderstandings on state-building.

The degree and characteristics of 'quasi-ness' of each state in our sample correspond to the level of 'quasi-ness' of its armed forces. As

19 See Smith, Jennifer (2009), *Democratisation and Good Governance in the Democratic Republic of Congo: A Case Study of South Kivu Province*, International Alert, Initiative for Peacebuilding, online edition, pp.5f, for the quote p.23

demonstrated, similarities and differences can be observed in historical and cultural factors, given the broad variety of stages of statehood that were identified, from natural states to doorstep nations to open-access order states – or from proto or illian statehood in the Congo and proto-Weberian Cameroon to Weberian state-building in post-genocide Rwanda. In each example the constructive or counter-productive role of the armed forces has been brought to light. The 'semi-stable' neo-patrimonial polity of Cameroon co-exists with post-genocide Rwanda, which is actually the revivification of a stable pre-colonial kingdom, whilst after 50 years of official existence the DRC is a mere geographical unit awaiting its first experience as a coherently-ruled state entity. Hence, whilst historically contemporaneous and partly geographically contiguous, these countries exist in different 'socio-political centuries'.

The most advanced country in terms of state consolidation, Rwanda, started from the 'pole position' of having a long history of statehood and standing armies. This position, however, had not been exploited positively before the caesura of genocide hit the nation; but, thereafter, the local elite came to the conclusion that general rather than privatised security, based on the law rather than privileges, was the core of its common interest. The formation of an open society as the foundation for a lively democratic culture is, however, not yet in sight.

Whilst the character of the state as a coercive apparatus has shifted in much of the world towards one of a polity responsible for protecting and serving its citizens, the ambiguous attitude of Central African leaders toward the pursuance of the common good testifies to their uneasiness with this advanced concept of the state. Although the Charter of the African Union puts respect for the rule of law at the core of the continent's values, this has yet to be translated into reality.

Tilly's 1975 reflections on the military of then-recently created states demonstrate that when an army does not fulfil its constitutional role the military rather impedes progress towards democratisation and the advancement of the common good, and it presents a strong tendency towards domestic political interventionism and praetorianism. This praetorianism, as demonstrated above, is the expression of a political culture in which the struggle for power and wealth is not mediated through institutions but directly carried out by the social actors. In such a confrontation those who can muster the means to prevail produce a political disorder prone to violence and corruption.

With the exception of Rwanda *vis-à-vis* the other Central African officer corps, military legitimacy simply reflects a political reality derived from regime legitimacy rather than from an abstract constitutional legitimacy. To the ordinary soldiers, who participate as auxiliary clients in the struggle between the powerful but who are themselves excluded from many of the benefits of the intra-elite power contest, this means that they lurk in a precarious balance between two positions: on the one hand, their slightly privileged position relative to unarmed non-elite compatriots allows the viewer to describe them as a distinct group comparable to Karl Marx's *Arbeiteraristokratie* preying on their equals; and on the other hand, their insecure stand within their military hierarchical milieu, which makes them a rather disjointed *Lumpenmilitariat*.

Under current Central African conditions, the military is able to perform neither its technical combat role nor its assumed role as a unifying agent and pillar of the social contract. Individual soldiers, with either high or low status within their wider non-military community are bound up in semi- or non-state patronage systems; they are not encouraged to perform in a professional manner.

With different characteristics of quasi-ness of African armies established relative to their own claims of Huntingtonian professionalism, each of the armed forces of our sample shows its historically and politico-culturally shaped form of quasi-ness. It is hence possible to compare the qualitative level of quasi-ness between the different armed forces. For this, a scale comprised of three main variables can be used. The first variable is the degree of exposure to the patrimonial political and economic system of which the armed forces are a part; the second is the degree of political engagement the armed forces take on as part of the responsibility they assume – on their own initiative or spurred by the political leadership – to advance the common good of the community (as opposed to politicisation, which implies taking sides in domestic political struggles); and the third the degree of professionalism they demonstrate in performing their own, military tasks, however these are defined - crushing a rebellion, repelling an enemy, supporting a peacekeeping engagement, etc. Using such a scale, the respective degree of quasi-ness of the Congolese, Cameroonian and Rwandese armed forces can be illustrated by the graph below.

As part of a profoundly clientelist political and social order and instrument of an arbitrary decision-making system, the armed forces of the Congo present the highest degree of quasi-ness among the three of our case studies. It has been only marginally and occasionally in their fifty years of existence that some of their components have contributed to the construction of the state and actually helped in defending its sovereignty. Cameroon, as was suggested at the start of this survey, is a middle-ground case, in which pockets of professionalism and a degree of national pride in the armed forces do contribute to supporting a state with fragile foundations, but cannot guard the

military against the influence of a deeply anchored patrimonialist social and political system.

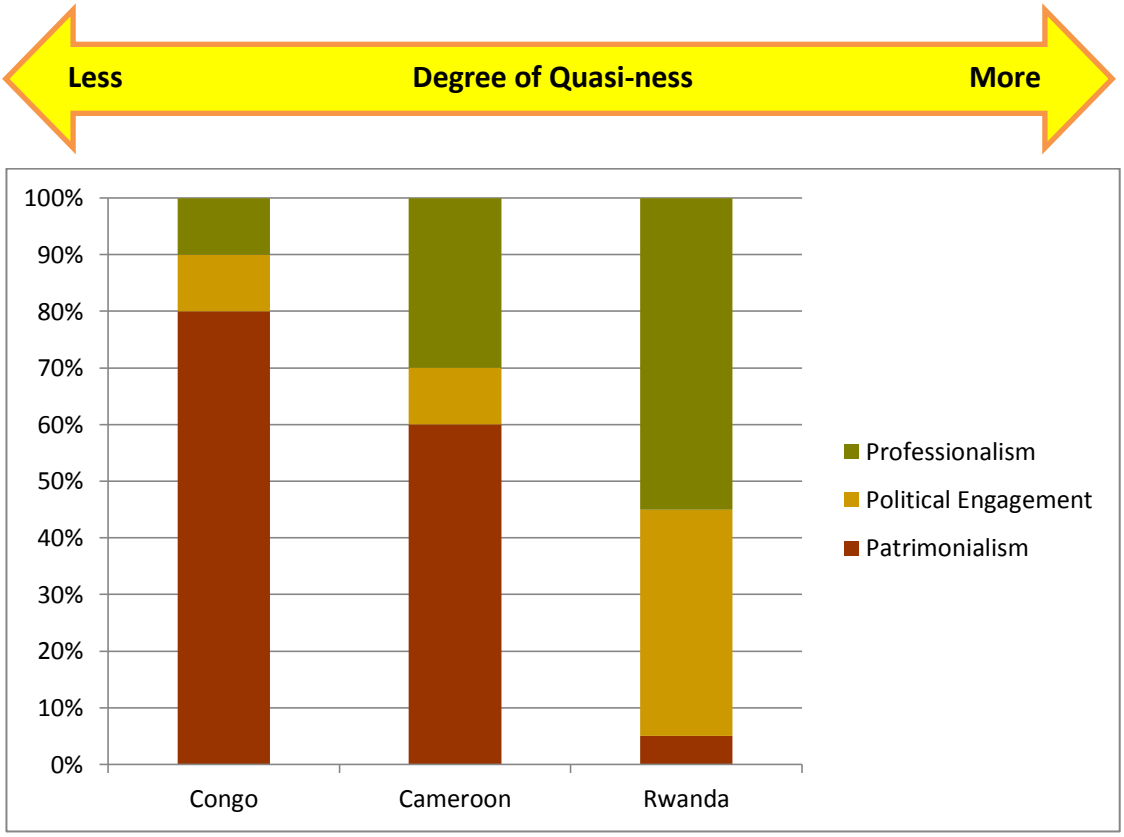

Table 8: Relative quasiness of African armed forces

In Rwanda, patrimonialism and clientelism have largely been eliminated from the armed forces, being replaced by a very strong political involvement at the service of a legal person, the state; great strides are also being made toward the creation of an internationally recognised professional army. Two features of the Rwandese armed forces, however, still distinguish them from the Huntingtonian model of the professional military: the non-differentiation of the state and the regime at the service of which they have been employed since the 1994 genocide, and the inclusion in their tasking of support for national economic development.

The Central African military of our samples are quasi-armies of different qualities. Two of them represent obstacles, to different degrees, while one of

them is a vehicle, to state-building. Whilst the Cameroonian and Congolese military falsely claim to be professional armies, the Rwandan RDF represents a kind of quasi-army fostering a new understanding of civil-military relations – better attuned to the regional political culture than a Huntingtonian army could be.

Bibliography

List of interviews

Out of a total of 90 semi-structured interviews the list below includes only those which were eventually exploited for this project. A minority of interviewees agreed to be quoted and nominally mentioned. A majority chose to remain anonymous. In some of those cases interviewees are quoted by types of position occupied, date and place. Some interviews were carried out entirely off the record and are therefore omitted from the list. Only institutions are named if Chatham House rules were agreed. Anonymised interviews are identified with roman numbers instead of names. Many interviews lasted over a stretch of several days in total, and over multiple meetings.

Belgium

Be1 Colonel Claude Lambert
at multiple occasions between September 2010 and June 2012, Brussels

Be2 Jean-Marie Deheyn, former head of ICRC Rwanda
at multiple occasions between September 2010 and June 2012, Brussels

Be3 Jacquij, Philippe, Koninklijke Vereniging Vrienden van het Legermuseum, August 2010, Brussels

Be 4 Lierneux, Pierre, Senior Researcher Royal Museum of Warfare, August 2010, November 2011, Brussels

Be 5 Colonel Luc Marchal, June 2012, Brussels

Be 6 Colonel Fernand Pettiaux, October 2011, February 2012, Brussels

Be 7 Colonel Ghislain Woelmont, October 2011, February 2012, Brussels

Be 8 Captain Richard Nizet August 2012, Liège

Be 9 General (DRC) Paul Mukobo Mundende, October 2011, February 2012, Brussels

Be 10 Captain (DRC) Pauline Kayuba, February 2012, Brussels

Be 11 Mrs Andréa Moutarde, Amicale des Anciens du Kivu-Maniema & Albertville, February 2012, Brussels

Be 12 Ambassadeur Louis de Clerck, former Belgian Congo regional administrator, Brussels, March 2010

Cameroon

Ca 1 Cameroonian Ministry of Defence, under Chatham House Rules (CHR), January 2012, Yaoundé

Ca 2 Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (CHR), April 2011, Yaoundé

Ca 3 Ecole Supérieure Internationale de Guerre (CHR), Yaoundé, January 2012

Ca 4 General Pierre Semengue, April 2011, Yaoundé

Ca 5 Professor Pierre Titi Nwel, April 2011, Yaoundé

Ca 6 Professor Joseph Vincent Etuda Ebodé, December 2010 and April 2011, Yaoundé

Ca 7 Professor Elie Mvie Meka, June 2011, Paris

Ca 8 Professor Mathias Owona Nguini, April 2011, Yaoundé

Ca 9 Dr Abdoul Azis Youba, April 2011, Yaoundé

Ca 10 Jean Bosco Talla, Editor *Germinal*, April 2011, Yaoundé

Ca 11 Colonel II, April 2011, Douala

Ca 12 Colonel III, December 2010, Libreville

Ca 13 Adjutant I, July 2012, Yaoundé

Ca 14 Prof. Balibutsa, December 2010, Libreville

Ca 15 Professor Fogué, April 2011, Yaoundé

Ca 16 French military adviser I, January 2012

Ca 17 French military adviser I, June 2012

Democratic Republic of Congo

Co 1 German Embassy, Kinshasa, July 2011 (CHR)

Co 2 Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, Kinshasa, July 2011 (CHR)

Co 3 Congolese Ministry of Defence, Kinshasa, September 2011 (CHR)

Co 4 General José Mulubi, Kinshasa, September 2011

Co 5 General Maurice Aguru, at multiple occasions, Libreville August 2010 and September 2011, Kinshasa 2011

Co 6 Professor Lumengo Neso Kiobe, Kinshasa, July 2011

Co 7 Professor Jean Pierre Mavungu, Kinshasa, September 2011

Co 8 Professor Pamphile Mabiala Mantuba-Ngoma, Kinshasa, July 2011, September 2011

Co 9 Professor Philippe Biyoya Makutu, Kinshasa, September 2011

Co 10 Colonel Valentin a.D. (FRG), Kinshasa, September 2011

Co 11 Colonel Marco Hekkens (EUSEC DRC), July 2011

Co 12 Congolese veteran IV, Kinshasa, July 2011

Rwanda

Rw 1 Brigadier General Frank Rusagara

Rw 2 Major General Paul Rwarakabije, 2011, Kigali

Rw 3 Major Gerard Nyirimandzi, May 2011, Kigali

Rw 4, Colonel I, Rwanda, Kigali June 2011

Rw 5 Colonel André Vincent, Brussels 2012

Rw 6 Belgian former military advisors see Be 1, Be 6

Rw 7 Major Willem de Kant, former aide de camp of UNAMIR commander Dallaire

Rw 8 Belgian Major II, military contemporary witness, Brussels

Rw 9 Rwandan defence attaché, London, March 2013

Rw 10 Interview at the Ministry of Defence, Historical Department (CHR), Kigali, April 2011

Rw 11 RDF active political officer, September 2012, Ruhengeri

Rw 12 Charles Gakumba, Journalist and Historian, May 2011, Kigali

Rw 13 Interview at the Rwanda High Commission, November 2012, London

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